Monster Attack Team

ISSUE
7

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Gridman!

Metaloid?

Kamen Rider
Black!

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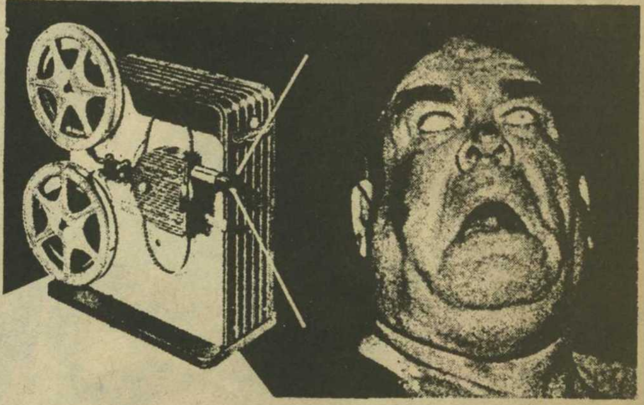

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MONSTER ATTACK TEAM Issue Seven

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Let's Fight Monsters! Let's Really Fight!

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Rantings, Ravings, Death Threats and other Feedback...

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Hey Ed!

Just wanted to drop a note in praise of Issue #6. Unlike some other zines which have a tendency to rip into, instead of review some shows, I enjoyed the look back at Kaiketsu Zubat. I've only seen the first four episodes, however, I wholeheartedly concur with you on the overall feel and attitude of the show. Also, the episode guide to Return Of Ultraman was great. Speaking of poorly designed kaiju, my all-time worst has to be Sasahiraa from episode 48. What the hell was that thing?

For future articles, I hope to see coverage of Ultraman Tiga, which is rapidly becoming one of my favorites and possibly the 1987 show Metalder. Maybe it appeals to me because Saban did its usual make-over on the show, toning it down. But I like it anyway.

Thanks and keep it going.

Sincerely,
Richard Cohen

Thanks for the praise, Richard. Kaiketsu Zubat is definitely a favorite with all the MAT gang down here. We hope to have an Ultraman Tiga article sometime in the future. As for Metalder, we'll have to wait and see on that one...

Dear Ed,

MAT # 6 kicked major posterior! I can't think of anything I didn't like.

I LOVED the KISS stuff included in this issue (I vaguely remember that Cream magazine cover with the band as a four-headed monster attacking Tokyo). When KISS played Japan earlier this year, they should've had Sekima II as their opening act (Demon Kogure & co. are quite KISS-like). Do you know if another Japanese KISS-like band, E-Z-O, are still together? Gene Simmons produced their first US album a decade ago, and a few years back, their lead singer Masaki joined Loudness.

Well, that's all for now, I wish you continued success with MAT, and I'm looking forward to Issue #7!

Your friend,
Danny Coffin

I'm afraid I don't have much info on what became of E-Z-O, Danny, but I've heard pretty much the same things you have. They might end up in a future Kaiju Bandstand article if Mike Keller can link them to any genre films or TV shows. Maybe one of our readers has more information.

Dear Ed,

Here are my comments on the latest MAT. First, the money that went into printing was well spent. The picture quality was outstanding. It's too bad the paper quality of newsprint is the equivalent to toilet paper and not even up to copy paper in terms of thickness. Guess there's always going to be a trade-off. Well, worked out fine. The color cover was a very nice bonus.

Thanks for the feature on Hiroshi Miyauchi, one of my favorites. It seems I'm far from alone in this view, even on this side of the Pacific. I wish the article could've been more in-depth, but, hey, I'm not going to quibble. Besides, there's always next time. Let's see, you DID have Zubat, V3, and you mentioned most of the really major ones (or at least the ones I'm familiar with), But... no Sister Streetfighter? Or Kamen Rider ZX? Oh, the humanity! Only kidding, it was a fantastic and respectful tribute.

I suppose if I was going to complain about something, it would be... TYPOS. Yes, the bane of every writer's existence. I know from experience it's tough to find (much less fix) the little rascals, but PLEASE try for a little more thorough proofreading job next time. It will make your already fine magazine quantum leaps better. I thank you.

That's it from this end. MAT was lots of fun. Hope to see it again soon. All the best.

Sincerely,
Christopher Elam

Thanks for the constructive criticism, Chris. Unfortunately, most of the typos were caused by clashes in computer transfers that we didn't catch until too late. We hope you find issue 7 more up to speed. As for Hiroshi Miyauchi, check out the Blue Go-Ranger profile in this issue.

Ultra-MAT Fan Section

Your Monstrous Editors

Snow Rider, Edward Holland, ready to roll (deep in the heart of Texass)

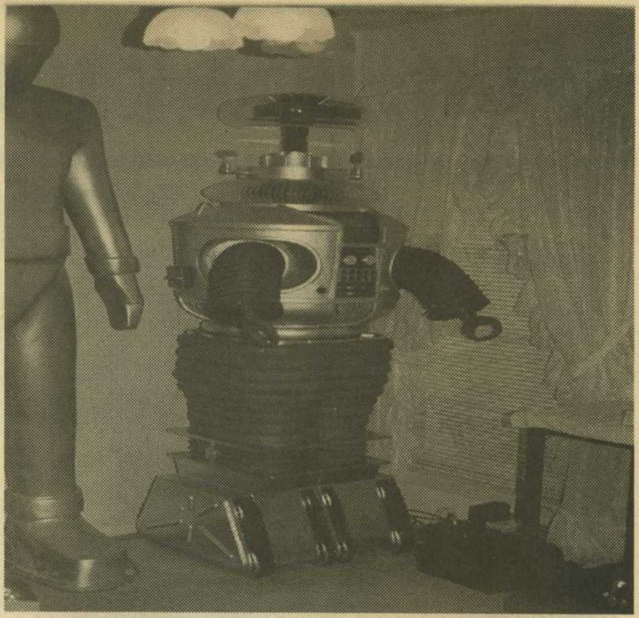
Mike Keller searches for kaiju on the shores of Loch Ness

Toei-ing Around

By Tracy Sanders

I think that I shall
never see
A Kamen Rider built
like me.
Kamen Rider's made
of bugs and stuff
And I am just a lil'
cuff.
Poems are writ by
idiots like me
But only Toei can
make Kamen Riders
1, 2, and V3.

John Tempesta of **White Zombie** sends MAT his regards. He told us that Rob Zombie is the real monster (kaiju fan) behind the music of the band.



YM 3 Robot Construction Project
by Bill Hughes

I am a comic book artist by trade and one day a client asked if I could produce full sized costumes and props for one of their characters. This involved constructing, among other things, three remote controlled robots. In building them I was required to do sculpting and fiberglass work. About this time I began to work on a project that I've wanted to start ever since I was six years old, a full sized Lost In Space Robot. This was purely for my enjoyment. After working on the other three robots, I now felt confident in starting the L.I.S. robot.

But there was one major obstacle. The bubble head was something I never could figure out how to make. Without it, I could not finish the robot. Well, as luck would have it, just as I was thinking about starting, I found an ad in Toy Shop Magazine that offered a full sized L.I.S. robot bubble head. Isn't it funny how things happen like that? Well after talking to the man who built them I learned that many other people around the country were beginning the same project. My first thought was to get in touch with some of them and try to pool our efforts. But what could I offer them?

The one area of the robot that I had studied and thought about alot was its torso. I had memorized every aspect of the part. I could even pick out the defects in every model kit. And they are all wrong no matter what the ads say! My new found understanding of sculpting techniques and fiberglass casting made the torso the easiest part for me to produce. After talking to a few people I quickly learned the torso was the one piece no one else could produce. Another piece had fallen nicely into my robot puzzle. I eventually made an arrangement to work with John Rigg on the project. He had built several robots in the past including, Robby the Robot (from Forbidden Planet) and a fully automated L.I.S. Robot. I soon found out John was one of the finest craftsmen I have ever met and a real nice guy to boot! We made a deal and I began the torso while John got busy on most of the rest of the robot.

I finished my torso and the day came when John sent me what he had worked on. Try to imagine getting three crates in the mail one day with full sized robot parts in them. It's like getting the greatest garage kit in the world! Much to my added surprise, John had put electronics and motors in everything! I just couldn't have been happier.

I later sculpted a full sized Gort (from The Day The Earth Stood Still) for him and we dabbled a bit on Robby. Since my first L.I.S. robot I have gotten a cast off of the original torso and I am now working on my second robot. I guess this is about as much fun as any obsessive behavior can be!

Not only does Bill spend his time obsessively making Robots but he also works on books. Lucasfilm has currently got him working on a Droids book and GoldenBooks has him doing 3 Star Wars children's books at the same time.

The Adventures Of El Frentico And Go-Girl!

By Kurt McCoy

I have, notoriously, been a fan of the more unusual products of popular culture. I have been a longtime fan of Godzilla films, of Japanese Sentai television series, and comic book superheroes in all their various manifestations. More to the point, a lifetime fan of Masked Mexican Wrestler films. So, when I ran across this small film I sent off a letter of inquiry and soon thereafter received the three episodes of ***THE ADVENTURES OF EL FRENETICO & GO GIRL***, "*Wax Terror*", "*Crimes of Fashion*", and "*Shades of Crime*". I was prepared to be charitably sympathetic to something in the order of high school theater filmed on a camcorder. What I received was a delightful surprise.

THE ADVENTURES OF EL FRENETICO & GO GIRL embodies one of the best arguments for allowing genre films to be made by fans of the genre, rather than by cynical professionals out to squeeze a few bucks out of fandom. These three episodes are rough gems in a market choked with direct-to-video exploitation dreck. Made on virtually no budget to speak of, but with great enthusiasm and a labor-of-love attention to detail, EL FRENETICO & GO GIRL combines the best elements of Mexican Masked Wrestler cinema, Hong Kong martial arts adventure, and camp superhero chic. It is a hip and very, well, "frenetic" mixture.

Producer Owen Cooper has managed to assemble a production company of surprising talent with enthusiasm and professionalism you do not always find on projects that pay much better. From Doug Roussin's startlingly superb logo and hilarious opening credit animation to Dan Cuddy's crackling with cool soundtrack, with its surf guitar riffs and moody themes, the films are loaded with creative sparkle. Jim Robertson, the overworked but obviously talented man behind both the camera and the sound mikes, does a super job under what must have been very tight conditions. The final product is polished to its kitschy sheen by some very creative editing which helps to cover some of the inevitable rough spots that come with low budget film-making.

The films center on the crime fighting duo of El Frenetico, an aging, out of shape masked wrestler turned super hero, and his dynamic and somewhat over-eager young partner, Go Girl. El Frenetico, portrayed by Charlie Pellegrino, is a former champion of the ring cut from the same mythic cloth as Santo or Blue Demon. Unfortunately, El Frenetico's later career has been dogged by mishaps and misunderstandings which resulted in him retiring from the ring to pursue crime fighting. The films find him late in his adventuring days, bitter at a public which does not understand or respect him, ready to sink into a long alcoholic stupor if not for the constant encouragement of his younger partner. This image of the Faded Hero taps into fan memories of Santo and other stars of the Mexican Wrestling genre who continued making films long after deteriorating past. Like of that what is found in Frank Miller's THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS or in films like ROBIN & MARIAN. Like other Faded Heroes in popular culture, El Frenetico grumblingly takes up the challenge, just one more time, when called on by his partner. Like the aged knights in the end of Boorman's EXCALIBUR, El Frenetico takes up the call to charge once more into battle. Unlike Arthur's last knights, however, El Frenetico belches and wobbles into action. This Faded Hero is presented as an affectionate parody, rather than as a tragic figure.

Charlie Pelligrino does a superb job of projecting character into his portrayal of El Frenetico. No easy task since he is covered from head to foot in his costume and El Frenetico's voice is dubbed in. Pelligrino's performance builds a whole repertoire of characterization bits from posture and gestures. He is alternately woozy, unstable, and heroically formidable. He pulls off grand sweeping gestures, and convincing hungover slouches.

The combination of Pelligrino's posturing and the hilariously dubbed in dead pan dialogue is just one of the clever and authentic touches that makes these films such a treat. After all, even the great Santo was dubbed in his own films.

Frances Lee as his martial artist partner, Go Girl, is spunky and curvaceous, clever and very much in charge. An Attitude Chick with a Thunder Kick and a winning smile. She is the brains of the partnership, and in all honesty, does most of the fighting as well. Frances Lee's performance combines an enthusiastic "gosh-wow" openness with healthy doses of sarcasm and serious kick-ass attitude. Her transformation from shy, bespectacled office clerk to buxom no-nonsense crime fighter in crimson tights is pretty much worth picking up the episodes for in and of itself. She gets the lion's share of the fight choreography and a good portion of the clever dialogue, but she mostly plays the serious problem solver of the duo. There is zero "bimbo-factor" in her portrayal. Go Girl is very much a '90's heroine, empowered and competent, who is supporting her mentor largely out of personal loyalty, not dependence.

The true measure of any masked hero is found in the enemies that oppose him. El Frenetico and Go Girl face an eclectic assortment of deliciously vile villains including a mad industrialist, a homicidal fashion designer, a black clad mystery woman, hard as nails matrons, babyfaced musclemen, a masked nemesis from El Frenetico's days in the ring, and the usual army of hired guns and henchmen. Even the thugs have distinct personalities. It's worth repeated viewing just to pick out all of the neat character touches in the incidental villains. From sarcastic gun-men to mutant psychos to low rent ninjas, there is a parade of memorable characters even in the background. This is where the enthusiasm of fan film-making comes into play. You won't find that kind of exuberant characterization from generic extras. These folks were having fun, and it shows.

First and foremost of the El Frenetico villains is the mad industrialist Heinrich Syphon, whose scheme to transform New York's millions into edible wax statues forms the focus of the first episode "The Wax Terror". Syphon is played with manic aplomb by Jon Sanborne. Syphon is kind of a cross between James Bond's Dr. No and The Simpson's Mr. Burns, by way of the TV version of Gotham City, with just a touch of Jeffrey Dahlmer around the edges. While being shamelessly over the top, there is just the right hint of sincerely chilling undertone to Sanborne's portrayal to make Heinrich Syphon work as a villain. Heinrich Syphon is a successful enough villain, that he is brought back for a minor role in the third episode as well.

Clark Donnelly's villainous persona, The Fop, on the other hand, is not so much a psychotically evil character as an emotionally wounded outcast, lashing out at his tormentors through the only weapon at his disposal, his imagination. He kidnaps those who have rejected and belittled him to subject them to his own "Death to Beauty" fashion show. His "To Die For" lethal fashions are a hoot and are worn by appropriately apprehensive models.

"Crimes of Fashion" centers around the efforts of a failed fashion designer called The Fop, who is determined to either make it in the industry or destroy those who have prevented his success. He hires a gang of thugs to kidnap a rival designer and his models as well as the teacher who flunked him out of fashion school. The Fop's plan is to use the kidnapped models to display his own lethal designs in his "Death to Beauty" fashion show. The Fop's designs are constructed from unusual materials, incorporating dynamite, electrical wire and various sharp, cutty things which are not normally associated with casual or evening ware.

In this episode, the injured El Frenetico is rushed to a hospital by Go Girl, where the duo are confronted by ethnic prejudice in a softly satirical and socially conscious scene. Before El Frenetico can receive any treatment, the attending nurse asks if he and Go Girl are citizens. When asked if she can prove her own citizenship, a clearly annoyed Go Girl replies "Not without compromising my SECRET identity." "You should have thought about that BEFORE you put on the tights." replies the archly smug nurse, played by Louise Millmann who also played Hilda in the first episode. Go Girl is sent to fill out forms and commiserate with other costumed sidekicks. Meanwhile, the clearly Angelo and ironically scrawny Uberman is rushed in with a "papercut, one of the ones that stings!" and is instantly attended by a nurse and an intern and rushed immediately to treatment.

Humbled by his defeat, El Frenetico recovers and sets out to regain his fighting edge in a crash training program. The newly revitalized El Frenetico and Go Girl rush to confront The Fop, hopefully in time to save the models from his lethal fashion sense in the film's climactic fight scene. Go Girl gains unexpected assistance from her spunky cousin, who has refused to quietly play victim through her entire kidnapping and El Fuerte learns the startling true reason for his previous defeat. In the end, the heroes celebrate in their favorite costumed hero bar, the Two-Fisted ID and are joined by a new heroine, Runway, who looks suspiciously like Go Girl's cousin in spectacular purple tights. The heroes rock and twist through the closing credits in what is obviously one helluva cast party.

Thematically, "Crimes of Fashion" is about denying victimization and seeking empowerment in adversity. The Fop, outcast from the "Beautiful People" because of his own perceived ugliness does not accept his fate, but fights back using his imagination and wicked wit as weapons. Surprisingly, he wins a sort of victory through his efforts. Bonnie (Soomi Kim) refuses to just be a cringing hostage, fighting back first through verbal resistance and later taking part in the battle for her own liberation. She is transformed by her experiences and becomes a costumed crimefighter herself (Runway). Even El Frenetico does not allow himself to be stopped by his own physical slump, but retrains furiously to recapture the hero inside. The implication in this film is that both Fashion and Heroism are things that are generated inside the individual, not projected upon them by others.

The third episode in the ADVENTURES OF EL FRENETICO & GO GIRL finds the crime fighting duo facing a partnership crisis brought on by the inscrutable scheming of a mysterious black-clad agent named "Shade".

In an ever-escalating series of confrontations, Shade manipulates both sides while continually trying to lure Go Girl into ditching her of times ineffectual partner to form a new alliance. She tries to make common cause between herself, Syphon's loyal but under appreciated assistant Hilda and Go Girl, who it is shown has to carry much of the weight of her past his prime partner. Syphon and El Frenetico are both locked in unproductive cycles of established behavior. When Syphon can't think of a crime, he goes along with a mysterious scheme of Shade's, confident that it is carrying out his wishes and not her own. El Frenetico, on the other hand, is deep into a drinking binge of epic proportions and is only groggily aware of Go Girl's presence or absence.

Madoka Raine plays Shade with a lithe lethality, a sharp-edged beauty that threatens to take no prisoners. She uses white-booted snap-kicks and an incredibly versatile gun which displays a range of lethal, non-lethal, and just plain disturbing settings/ accessories to deal with her opponents. Whether snapping sarcastic quips at the ineffectual men-folk or slithering into smoldering close-up confrontations with Go Girl, she displays only two real moods; Dangerous, and Dangerously sexy. Good or Evil, Shade will make you shiver.

Frances Lee takes Go Girl into new territory in this episode. All of her relationships are threatened by the new chemistry introduced by Shade, her crimefighting relationship with El Frenetico, her secret identity's professional relationship, and, mostly by implication, her briefly mentioned personal relationship with a masked mariachi at the local superhero bar. She portrays a character who is cast into doubt, baited and provoked and genuinely confused, all without losing her core effectiveness. This time around we get to see her in black with her hair down and in crimson kicking the snot out of "cheap ninjas". Her prolonged knock down, drag out, don't forget to duck martial arts duel with Shade across the rooftops is really darn interesting too. It is worth picking up the tape if you can get it simply for the "It's not over till the fat lady sings, and we're both on diets!" line exchanged toward the end of this fight.

Charlie Pelligrino's El Frenetico does mostly bumbling comedic scenes, but still rises valiantly to the task when danger calls. Right after nature calls, first. Jon Sanborne's Heinrich Syphon is back in top manic form with several memorable lines and a general air of camp villainy that crackles with glee. Louise Millman gets to expand her memorable Hilda character into a much more meaty vision of Prussian menace. The fight scenes are much longer and more frequent than in the previous episodes and are noticeably better choreographed. Whereas the earlier El Frenetico battles relied as much on snappy, imaginative editing as choreography, these battles are more intricate and obviously more rehearsed. There is a much more confident rough and tumble feel to the ninja pile-ons and a crisp air of authority to the high kicks. The use of seriously over the top whip-crack, punching bag thud sound-effects gives the fights a gleeful Shaw Brothers kung fu cinema feel.

Thematically, "Shade" is about partnerships and empowerment. Shade's agenda demands that women stop being the silent and unappreciated partners of ineffectual men and begin to work for their own ends. She points out the dependence of the male protagonists on their female partners and their perceived lack of respect for the contributions of the women. Syphon is callously and casually exploitative in his relationship with Hilda, but he is that way in all of his relationships, being bound up in his own megalomania. El Frenetico is oblivious to much more than just Go Girl, but the difference is shown to be that even with his dependence on her abilities, and on alcohol, he will answer her call when needed.

The milieu of El Frenetico is built on two deep-seated beliefs which underlie the Faded Hero motif in most of its popular presentations. The first is that we want to believe that the heroes of our youth are somehow immortal, that no matter how much they might age and fade, they will come out of retirement just that one last time when we need them to. At the same time, we want to believe in our own generation's capacity for heroism, that we too are capable of the great feats we see in our heroes. This may seem like a pretty heavy notion to read into what are, admittedly, good-natured, goofy romps of films, but part of what makes EL FRENETICO & GO GIRL work as well as it does is that it is rooted in very firm archetypal ground.

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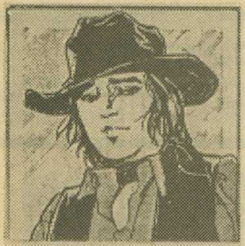

Akira Shinmei

24 years old, played by Hiroshi Miyauchi

position - No. 2. Blue Ranger; Rank - Sub-leader

Profile, Special Skills....

Martial arts, fencing, and shooting. Akira Shinmei is the only survivor of an attack by enemy spies in the mountains . He grew up alone, as an orphan; and later joined the Eagles unit with the help of an orphanage friend. Ace pilot, master license certified.

Characteristics....

Tallest Go-Ranger team member. (179 cm). Reddish/black wavy hair. Very manly with handsome facial features which, depending on his expression, can make him look cold with sharp-edged eyes. He is critical and sometimnes murmurs. His habits are smoking and playing guitar. Despite his good looks, he is prone to make mistakes.

Costume....

Hat, vest, pants, long sleeve color shirt. Black neck scarf, pendant, watch, and driver's gloves.

Personality....

Cool, brave and bold. He will smile fearlessly in front of an enemy, but remains pure and shy. As perverse and conceited as he is, he still loves machines, and will do anything for his favorite vehicle.

Weapons....

Ultra Blue arrow.

Skill....

Horizontal kick. Six layers kick (which eliminates six people at once).

AKIRA
SHINMEI

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TOKUSATSU NEWS

TEREBI TOKUSATSU FANS SADDENED BY RECENT DEATHS OF ULTRA CAPTAINS

Captain of Ultraman deceased

Mr. Akiji Kobayashi, who played the popular role of Captain Mura from Ultraman died at 65 due to lung cancer. When he was hospitalized for his check up 10 days before his death, he was not told and was unaware of his cancer. Mr. Kobayashi left a mark in most all the major franchises of Japanese live action. In addition to Ultraman, he appeared as a recurring character in the various Kamen Rider series, as Ruzo Dobashi in two of the more recent Godzilla films and in Gamera 2 as well. He also dubbed in the voice of John Wayne for a few of the Japanese releases of of the American actor's films.

The Captain of Return Of Ultraman, great supporting actor Nobuo Tsukamoto, dead at 63 due to a cerebral hemorrhage

Great actor;
Nobuo Tsukamoto, died Sept. 1st at the hospital of his home town - Tokyo. According to the spokesman of his office, Mr. Tsukamoto collapsed due to the cerebral hemorrhage while he was practicing his role in a play at the practicing theater in Tokyo. He was rushed into the nearest hospital, but it was in vain. He never recovered consciousness.

Mr. Tsukamoto joined the Tokyo Ensemble Theater after his graduation from actor/actress school. He played not only on the stage but was in the NHK TV drama "Shogun Hideyoshi Toyotomi", Fuji TV dramas, "Coach" and "Syouta's Sushi".

On August 27th, 1996, the first Ultraman captain actor, Akiji Kobayashi died due to lung cancer.

Mr. Tsukamoto was survived by his wife, Kazuko. There will be no funeral according to his will, but "Farewell To Nobuo Tsukamoto" will be held on the 6th at 3 p.m. at the "Play House" in Nerima-Ku, Tokyo.

Godzilla's parent, Mr. Tomoyuki Tanaka deceased.

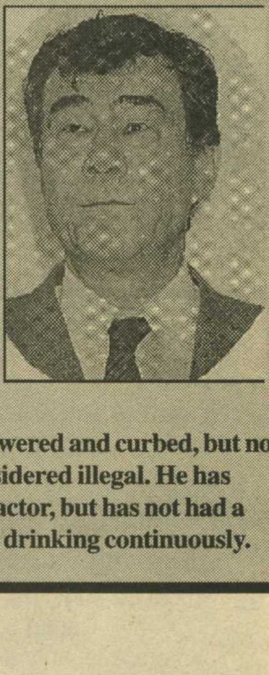
Chairman of the Toho Movie Company and the original creator of Godzilla, Mr. Tanaka died due to the sudden heart attack on April 2nd. He was 86 years old. Mr. Tanaka himself named the movie "Godzilla" in 1954, and created and produced the series until the 22nd film "Godzilla Versus Destroyer" in 1995. He was a very talented producer, producing "Akahige" and "Kagemusha", which were both directed by the infamous Kurosawa. He produced more than 200 movies. Mr. Tanaka's advice for the young producers was the attract the audience by the small scale every 10 minutes and

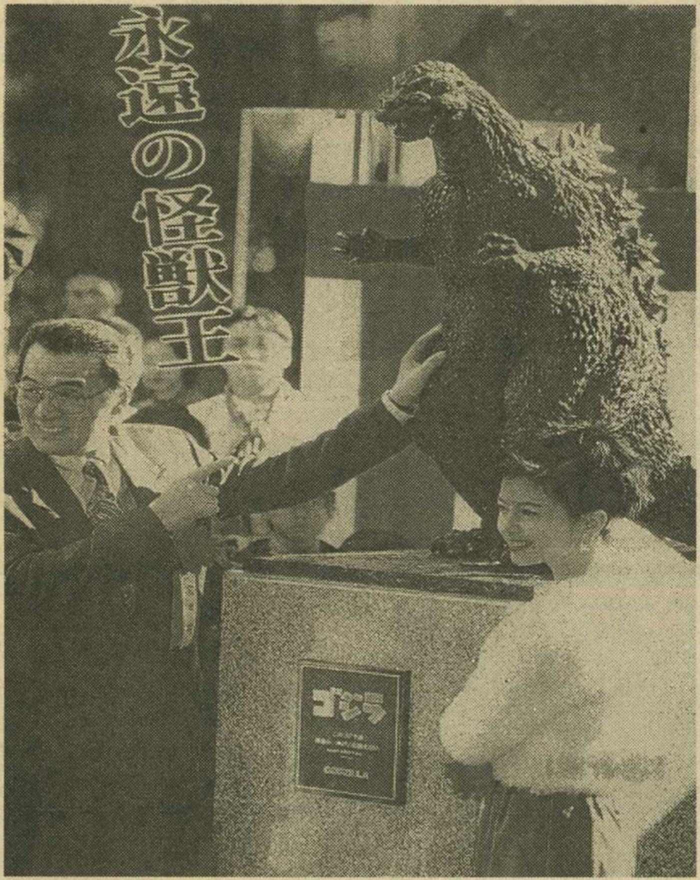
Tanaka cont...

by the large scale every 30 minutes in the movie. He loved Godzilla dearly, and wanted to create some innovative and outrageous idea-based movies in Japan to challenge the US movies.

Ex-Ultra Patrolman, Mr. Ide (Masanari Nihei - 55 years old) was arrested due to his attacking a woman (24 years old)

A drunk Nihei found a woman parking her car. As she stepped out of her car, he told her not to park her car there and punched and kicked her. She was assaulted, scarred up, and her arm was broken. Mr. Nihei played the role of Patrolman Ide in Ultraman (1966) and was popular among Japanese kids. "He was still confused about the role and his real life," someone stated, because the victim's car was parked a little skewered and curbed, but not enough to be considered illegal. He has been a free-lance actor, but has not had a steady job, so was drinking continuously.





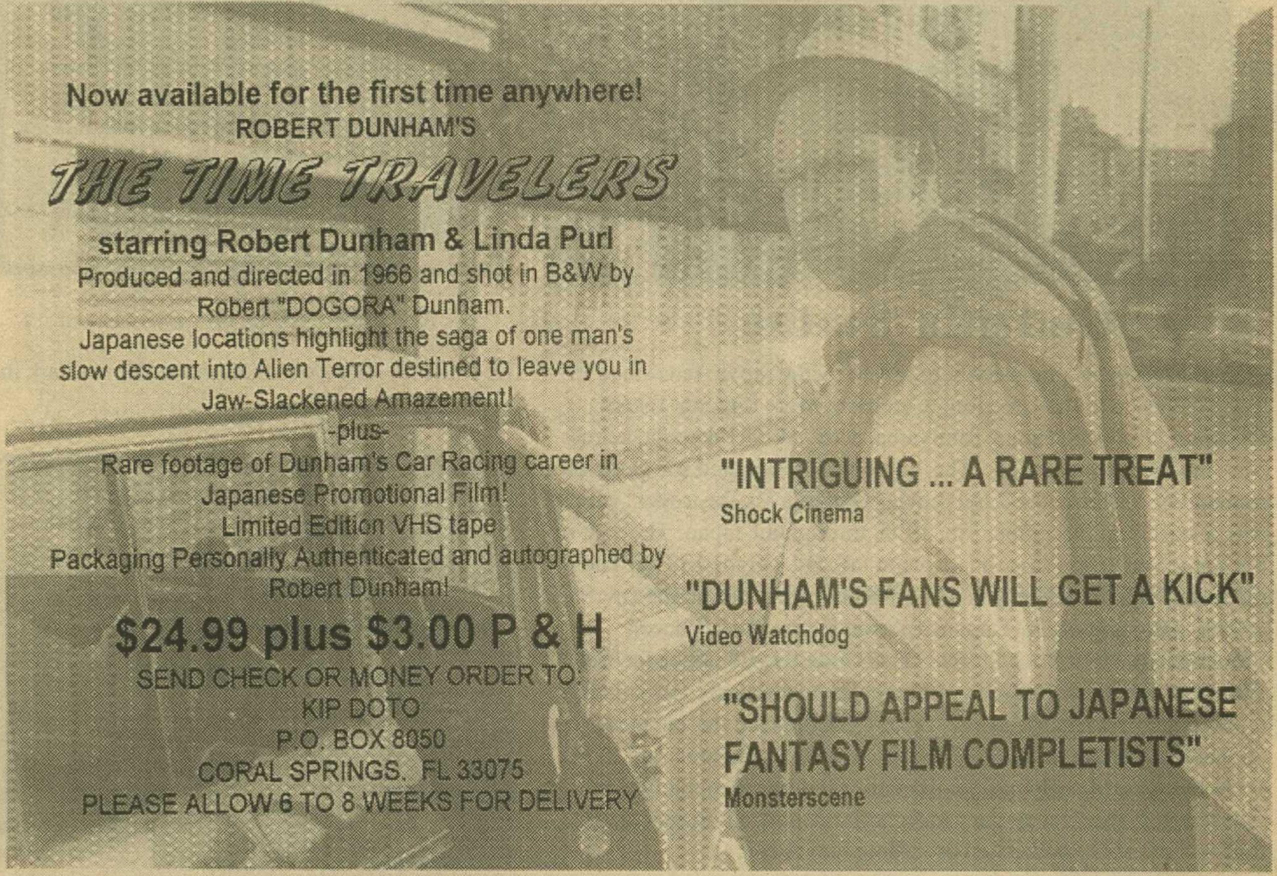
Godzilla Statue

Godzilla has been a monster hero, loved by the movie fans since 1954. The Godzilla statue was built in the Hibiya Park in Tokyo. Present at the Unveiling Ceremony were director Takao Okawara, Producer Shogo Tomiyama, actor Akira Takarada, actress Ms. Sawaguchi and others. The statue was designated for Godzilla's tremendous effort in the 22nd movie "Godzilla Vs Destroyer" which was released on December 9th, 1995, throughout Japan. The cost of the statue was 10 million. It is 1 meter tall and weighs 130 kg. The platform height is 1.3 meters. On the plate, you will find the engraved statement of Dr. Yamane (played by the great Takashi Shimura in the first film). It says "This Godzilla will not be the last Godzilla." We knew Godzilla would return. On May 20, 1998, the US will see the first American version of Godzilla, and the Japanese version will return in the 21st century. Producer Toyama said to the large audience of zealous Godzilla fans "Godzilla is invincible, he will return in the 21st century to fight in the new environment, as long as fans of Godzilla keep on calling him back".

TV MAGAZINE Sunday Night Special "Japan That Godzilla Saw" 8/13/95 7pm-9pm

Reported by Yohichi Iwasa

In 1945, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed by the USA. Japan accepted the "Potsdam Declaration". With that, the Pacific War ended. After the war, 50 years of Japanese history began its way. There was a movie that matched exactly with 50 years of Japanese history after the war. It was "Godzilla". "Godzilla" was first released in 1954. Producer Tanaka, Director Honda, and Special Effects technician Tsuburaya created the scientific and imaginary movie of "Godzilla." Movie crews and staff went through very difficult times making this movie since it was the first of its type made in Japan. What was the creature that Mr. Tsuburaya created? How was the name "Godzilla" derived? How did Mr. Nakajima, who was inside the Godzilla body, move around? All these questions are answered in the TV show. The show covers the entire history of the Japanese series. "King Kong Vs Godzilla" was created based on a popular professional wrestling show. Godzilla represented Japan and King Kong represented the USA. The film produced a good imaged for Japan since the Japanese economy was growing rapidly at that time. Godzilla changed into a good guy and protected the earth instead of trying to destroy it. In 1975, the series ended with "Terror Of Mechagodzilla." In 1984, bad Godzilla came back to the screen again. But, this time, Godzilla looked lonely. He was surrounded by high-rise buildings, instead of looking down on the city he was used to. After the wars, Japan changed so much. How did Godzilla perceive this change? People used to fight against the war and pollution. "Now, things are pretty normal, Godzilla can not find anybody to fight against", Director Omori stated. Producer Ido stated that this TV show will cover the 50 years of history in Japan after WWII. Families can watch this show together and learn about the changes and history of Japan since the end of WWII, using Godzilla as the key word.



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Gamera was released. Big hit on the first day.

"Gamera 2/Legion attack" was released on the 13th at 160 movie theaters throughout Japan. It was a good start, and in Tokyo some fans started to form a line the night before to get into the Hibiya movie theater. At 6 a.m, about 600 people lined up to get a seat. Toho movie company decided to use Miyuki movie theater also, which was right next to the Hibiya, to show this movie, causing "Twister" to be held one more day before its release. Gamera returned last year after a long hiatus. It is designated as a publicly accepted monster at the Toshima Amusement Park in Tokyo. The park is hosting the Exposition, and three beautiful Expo-companions gave Gamera a gold medal to coincide with the Atlanta Olympic Game this summer to cheer up the Japanese athletes. Director Kaneko said "After three years of relationship with Gamera, it was thought to be over, but part three is coming up soon".

The following article appeared as the regular "Borderline" column in issue 29 of the British magazine DREAMWATCH. It is reprinted with permission.

MONKEY BUSINESS

By Martin Day

High-quality entertainment for children in the late seventies came from what was then an unusual source - Japan. NTV of Tokyo followed the rather violent THE WATER MARGIN (shown on BBC2 between 1976 and 1978) with the much lighter fantasy MONKEY (1979 - 1981). MONKEY was based on HSI YU CHI (The Journey To The West) by sixteenth century author Wu Ch'eng-en, which had been translated into English as MONKEY by Arthur Waley in the 1940s. THE JOURNEY TO THE WEST is the story of a great quest, a fable based on the pilgrimage of a Chinese Buddhist scholar to India in 629 AD. The main character, however, is Monkey, a bold, crafty, and very flawed immortal, who represents mankind's stumbling attempts to grasp enlightenment.

NTV's MONKEY, rewritten by David Weir and dubbed into English, was a joyous explosion of Buddhist philosophy, high comedy and cheesy special effects. Each episode began by narrating the story of Monkey's creation to the immortal strains of the theme, Micky Yoshino's 'Monkey Magic'.

Monkey (Masaki Sakai) was the self-proclaimed great sage, Equal of Heaven, his arrogance bringing him to the attention of the Jade Emperor in the first episode "Monkey Goes Wild About Heaven". Monkey is made director of the Heavenly Stable, which he feels is beneath him, and then Lord of the Peach Garden. He guzzles all the magic peaches, becoming strong and immortal. Already armed with a size-changing staff, and able to fly immeasurable distances on a cloud summoned by blowing through his fingers, he finally over-reaches himself when the Great Buddha challenges him to jump out of his hand. Monkey reaches what he thinks is the end of the universe, where he finds five flesh-coloured columns, on which he writes 'Monkey was here', before urinating on the base of one for good measure. He returns to Buddha's hand, only to find the paint still wet on Buddha's finger. He is cast down to earth, and imprisoned beneath a mountain of rock.

In the next episode Monkey is rescued by the holy fool Tripitaka (Masako Natsume), who has set out on a journey to retrieve some Buddhist scriptures vital for the salvation of mankind. They are joined by two fallen commanders of the Heavenly Host, expelled for breaking the Jade Emperor's cup and drunken lechery. Sandy (Shiro Kishibe) has become a cannibalistic water monster with a necklace of skulls; Pigsy (Toshiyuki Nishida - Tonpei Hidari in later episodes) has become, well, a pig. Monkey, Sandy and Pigsy learn the errors of their ways as they accompany Tripitaka, although Monkey needs special encouragement to behave, having a golden band about his head that causes excruciating pain when Tripitaka prays a certain sutra (the book, in fact, ends with Monkey's head-band vanishing.)

Despite the spiritual trappings, MONKEY was an entertaining adventure serial, with bizarre monsters (very much of the GODZILLA school of realism) being dealt with to a wonderful disco soundtrack. David Weir, who had contributed to THE TROUBLESHOOTERS and THE LOTUS EATERS and written the unused DOCTOR WHO script "Killer Cats Of Gen Singh", had been responsible for re-working THE WATER MARGIN into English, but the priority with MONKEY was fun.

The humour in Weir's scripts is broad and clever ('These feet weren't made for walking' exclaims Monkey in "The Great Journey Begins"). It wouldn't be allowed today, of course (Monkey calls the night monster in "Monkey Plays Nursemaid" a 'cissy' and a 'poofter'); still less would a programme largely intended for children have a sex-addict as one of the lead characters (but then, everybody loved Pigsy, so that was OK). A typical exchange is : Man: 'The swine eats and drinks and fights all the time.' Monkey: '... So you wouldn't say that he's all bad then.' Or a monster asking another not to attack Monkey 'in your best clothes, dear.' In "Pigsy Woos A Widow" Pigsy says that the beautiful woman will be wondering what such an important personage is doing around here, to which Monkey replies 'No, she's thinking "Who's this fat pig with a big mouth?"'

There was a running theme about gender and cross-dressing, not least because Tripitaka was being played by a shaven headed woman (Monkey once commented to Tripitaka 'You've got such nice hands'). In the early episodes Kuan-Yin, Bodshisattva of mercy and compassion, changes gender to become a man, and Monkey impersonates Pigsy's wife. When Monkey sees the Great Buddha in female form he exclaims 'I always thought you were a fella!'

No wonder we all loved it, or that Bravo realized MONKEY could find an audience all over again. It's sad to report, though, that subsequent attempts by Japanese television to win over the youth of the West have taken the form of the moronic MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS.

GODZILLA King Of The Movie Monsters by Robert Marrero

Review by Lenell Bridges
(special thanks to Rob Dagg)

Well, here he is again, Mr. Robert Marrero with another book about sci-fi. This time he has covered everyone's favorite king of the monsters: Godzilla! Famed king of the silver screen of the Japanese movie scene. I wanted to first see how Mr. Marrero would treat our beloved king of the kaiju, so I borrowed my friend Rob's book before deciding to buy one. I'm glad I did, too! Otherwise I would have wasted $16.00! This book by Marrero and Fantasma books is not worth spending your hard earned cash on. It's bad enough that Marrero disrespects Japanese movies in his other book GIANT MONSTER MOVIES, but it's how he humiliates Toho's greatest creation in this new book that really takes the cake!

Reading through this book I found tons of mistakes and total inaccuracies. By giving this kind of misinformation, Marrero shows he is not the knowledgeable Godzilla fan he claims to be. First, he states in his forward that "chances are slim that the newer Godzilla films of the 90s like GODZILLA VS KING GHIDORAH or GODZILLA VS BIOLLANTE will ever be dubbed to English because the anti-American stance in both films is there." I don't know where "Robby" has been lately, but they both have been dubbed to English! They have been for a while now. I can't understand how he could not have known this. Many of his synopses for the Godzilla films are totally way out of line and way off. When he talks about each of the 22 Godzilla films, it makes me want to vomit on his book (I wished I did but it's my friend's book, though I know he wouldn't mind). His photos for the book are nice and he states that most of them are "rare", another flaw in his claims. I can go to the local Japanese book store at Yaohan plaza and find a Godzilla magazine that contains tons of photos! Adding insult to injury, a couple of the pictures like the GODZILLA VS "QUEEN" MOTHRA (on pg. 101), and GODZILLA VS MECHAGODZILLA (on pg.105) have crease markings on them. This brings the quality and presentation down like a rock!

Mistake making Marrero can't even spell or get the monster's names correct! Any daikaiju fan should know all of Toho's big beasties. Marrero spells Biollante as "Biolante". He calls Godzilla Junior (from GODZILLA VS DESTOROYAH) "Minya"! Gorosaurus is "Gorgosaurus" and Barugon (from the Gamera films) is mixed with Baragon, etc. I could go on, but I want to close in for the kill before this book review kills me! (pause for oxygen, I can't breathe!)

Marrero claims in his book that he gives credit to Toho, and also to Tri-Star, for some of the photos in the book. So is this book an authorized product of Toho? They don't seem to think so "Robby Boy", because Toho is suing the crap out of your publishing company! Fantasma Books should have known better what they were getting themselves into in listening to this buffoon. Now they have to come up with some big bucks to get out of the fix Marrero has placed them in. Toho wants big cash! I feel sorry for Fantasma. Marrero should get the heat, not them. There is a saying: ask first, before using! *(editor's note - Robert Marrero and Fantasma Books are one and the same entity; so the correct person is "getting the heat".)*

GODZILLA, KING OF THE MOVIE MONSTERS by Robert Marrero is a Godzilla fan's nightmare! I would not recommend this piece of garbage to any knowledgeable Godzilla fan. This book stinks totally. The price is too much for the useless mess of "Robby The Robot Marrero". Use your hard earned money to buy a Godzilla Bandai toy, it's better! The one use I can think of for this book is to tear the pages out for your dog to use (if you know what I mean). That wouldn't be a mistake since this book is filled with them! THIS BOOK IS CRAP!!!! Godzilla was unfortunately another victim of this idiot's half-brained scheme to make some bread!

Rating: Zero Lenell Bridges

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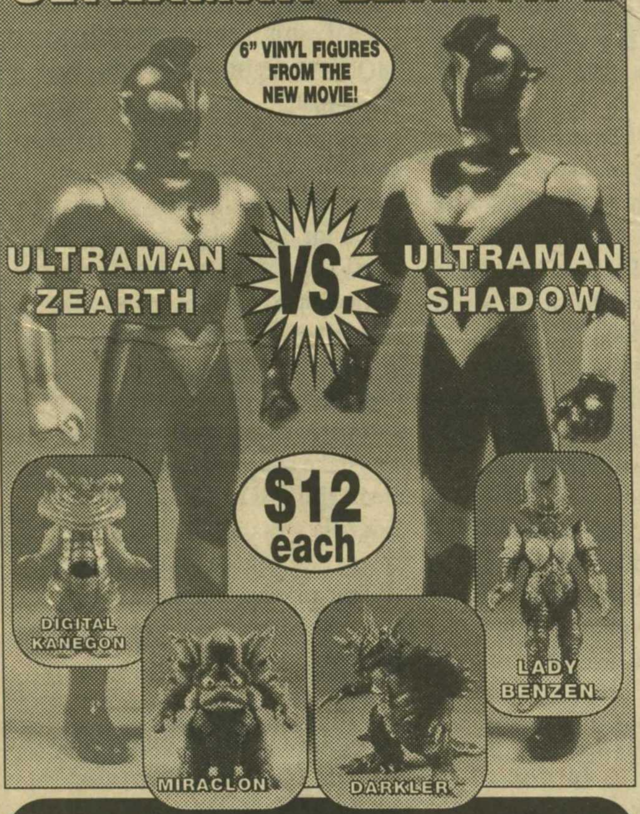
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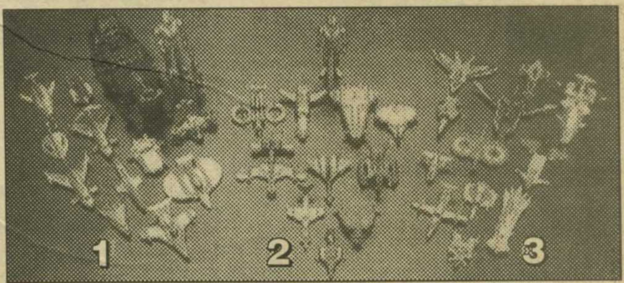

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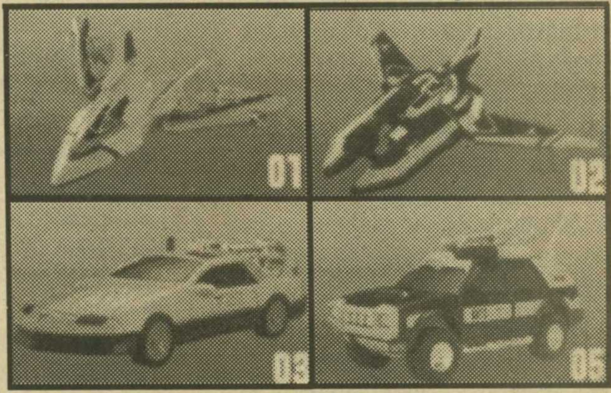

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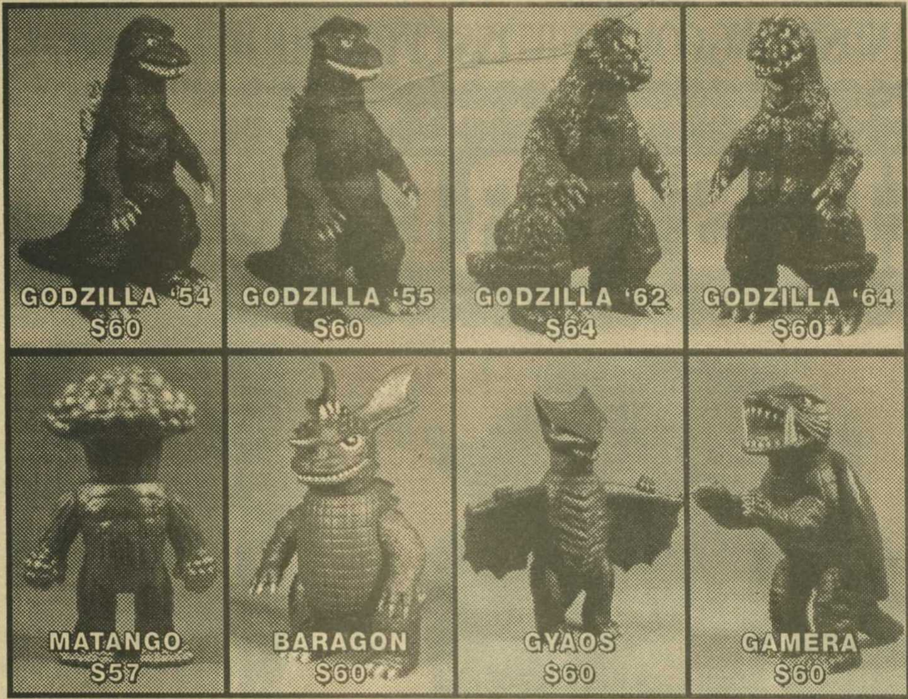

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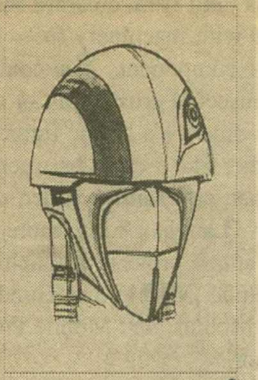
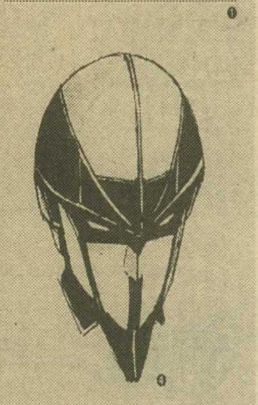
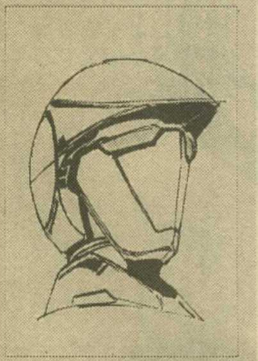
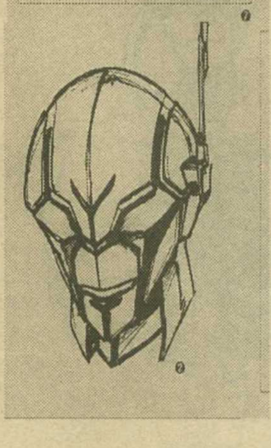


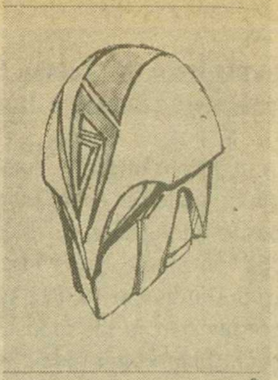


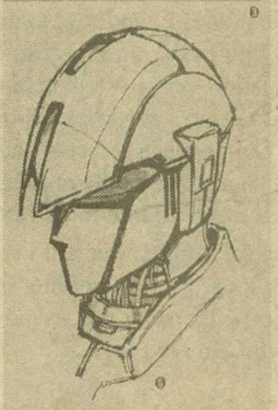


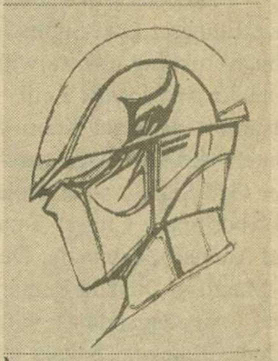


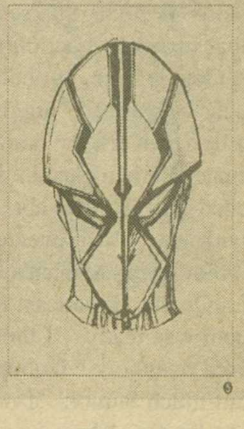
Sentai Series Monster and Characters Art Design Book

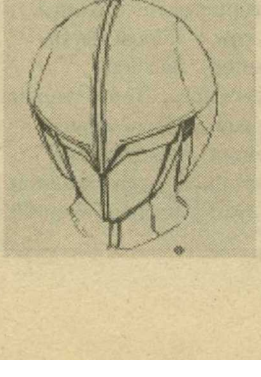
Yutaka Izubuchi is one of the most influential monster and costume art designers who ever worked on the Sentai Series programs. He worked on the infamous ground breaking programs: Dynaman, Bioman and Changeman. He is now one of Japan's most prolific animation mecha designers, and has done designs for: Aura Battler, Dunbine, Mobile Police Patlabor, Silent Mobius, etc.









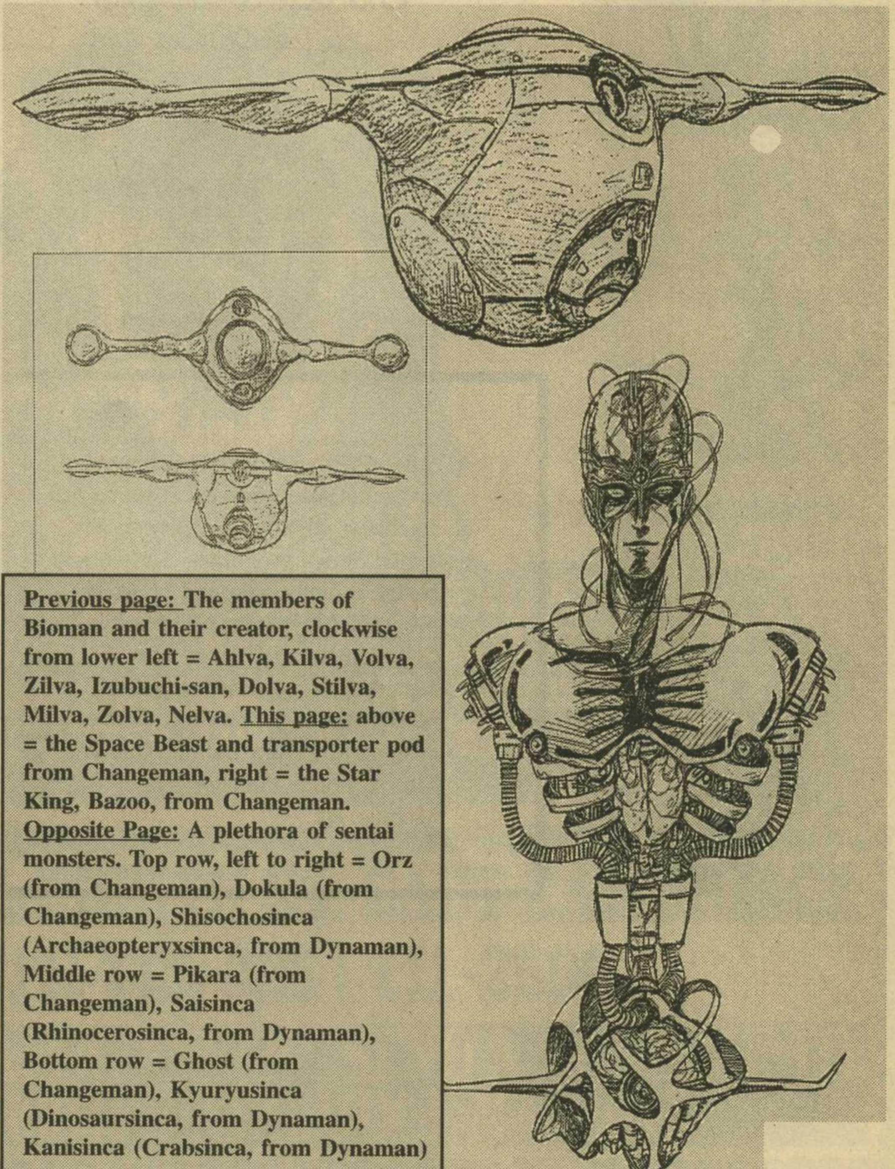


Excerpts from the Yutaka Izubuchi interview in Animerica June 1994.

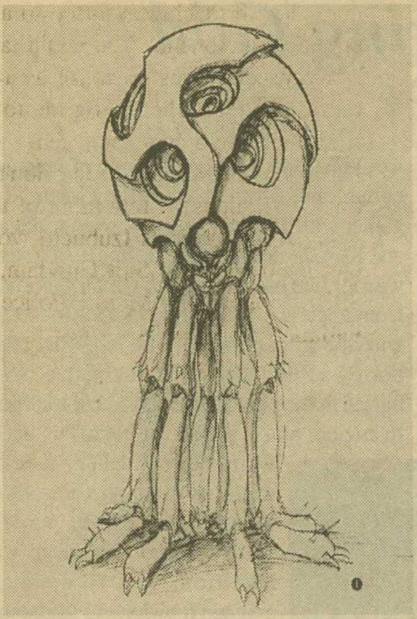
Born in Tokyo in 1958, Yutaka Izubuchi made his debut on the anime scene designing monster-like "villain mecha" on Studio Nue's Fighter Warrior Daimos in 1978. Asked how he got his start in the industry, Izubuchi blames pure luck. "Back in my fan days I happened to doodle a few figures during a visit to an animation studio," Izubuchi recalls. "The designs weren't anything much, but Daimos' late director Tadao Nagahama got a look at them and asked me if I'd like to design something for real. I was still in my teens back then." After working on other projects, Izubuchi was asked by Toei to work on God Sigma.

Broadcast in 1980, Great Space Emperor God Sigma had Izubuchi rubbing elbows with Area 88 creator and former Leiji Matsumoto assistant Kaoru Shintani. Izubuchi did the villain mecha. After God Sigma, other projects followed: Space Cruiser Yamato III, Final Yamato, Xabungle, Dunbine, and Macross, Do You Remember Love. An acquaintance with Toei producer Takeyuki Suzuki led to an offer to work on a 1982 sentai or "combat team" live-action series called Goggle Five, but because Izubuchi was already juggling so much design work, he had to decline. Fortunately, when Suzuki approached him in 1983 about working on Dynaman (which eventually went onto notoriety as a What's Up Tiger Lily? style dub, broadcast in the US), Izubuchi was ready. "I thought I'd die from overwork," Izubuchi says without much humor. "I really thought I'd die. There was just so much work to finish when I was still paying my dues. Live-action, now...that was pure fun. The production atomsphere is completely different from animation. It's a completely different system. It helped that I was already a fan, of course, and that Mr Suzuki listened to all the ideas that I came up with."

According to the interview, it seems that Izubuchi is most content when working behind the scenes. When speaking about his contribution to the OAV Aura Battler Dunbine, Izubuchi stated, "My own style and my own idiosyncrasies are common to each project I work on, but in a larger sense you can easily distinguish each model. Dunbine, for example, features mecha that are organic and even insectoid or monster-like at times. On the other hand, mecha from a fantasy show such as Galiant are done completely different. The Dunbine mecha itself is built from creature shells crafted with machinery fused to an organic component. You could take it as an insect, a crustacean, or as a robot. And it's a heroic figure, to boot. It's rather like a cross between Ultraman and Kamen Rider, don't you think?" (Laughs) A few more of the many anime projects Izubuchi worked on include: Mobile Suit Gundam, Silent Mobius, and Mobile Police Patlabor.



Previous page: The members of Bioman and their creator, clockwise from lower left = Ahlva, Kilva, Volva, Zilva, Izubuchi-san, Dolva, Stilva, Milva, Zolva, Nelva. This page: above = the Space Beast and transporter pod from Changeman, right = the Star King, Bazoo, from Changeman. Opposite Page: A plethora of sentai monsters. Top row, left to right = Orz (from Changeman), Dokula (from Changeman), Shisochosinca (Archaeopteryxsinca, from Dynaman), Middle row = Pikara (from Changeman), Saisinca (Rhinocerosinca, from Dynaman), Bottom row = Ghost (from Changeman), Kyuryusinca (Dinosaursinca, from Dynaman), Kanisinca (Crabsinca, from Dynaman)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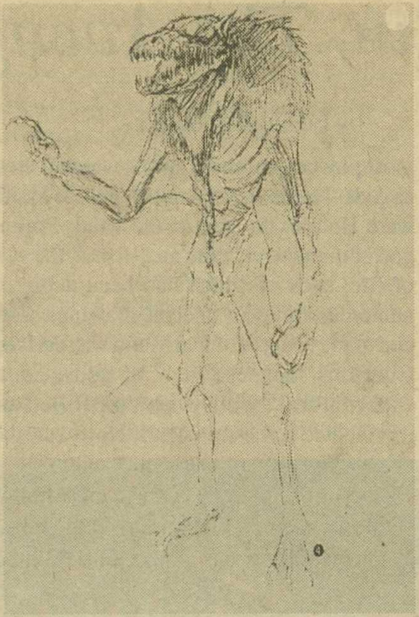
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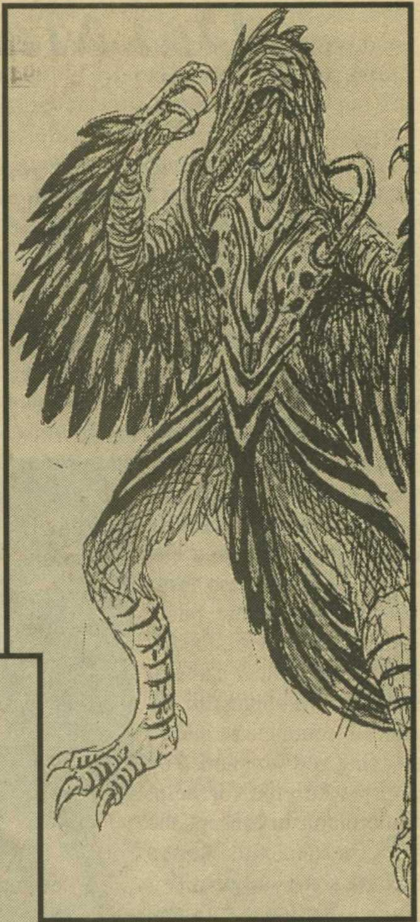

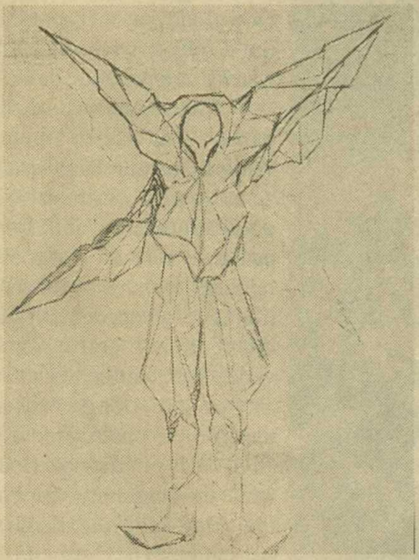

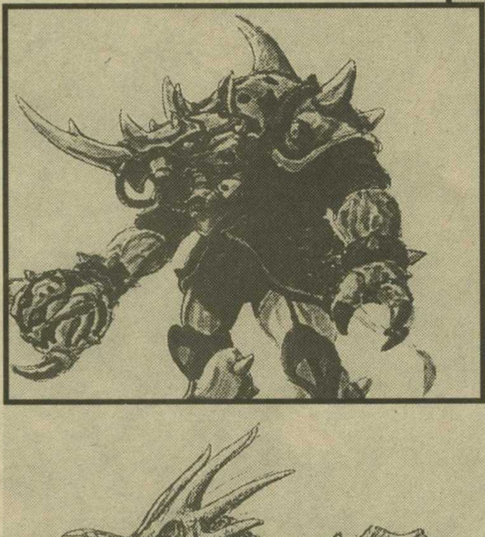

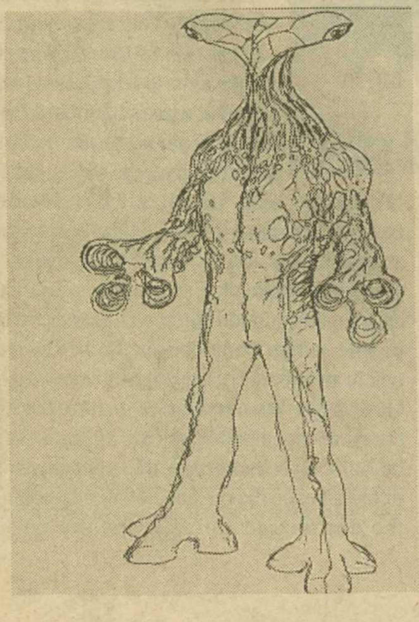

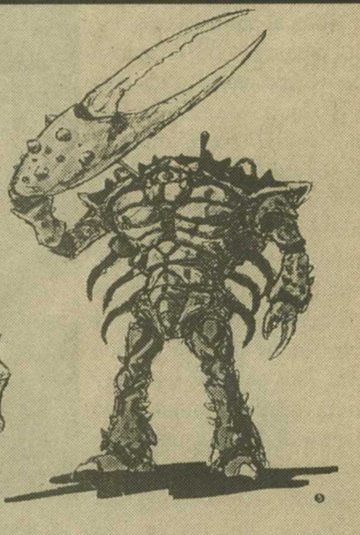
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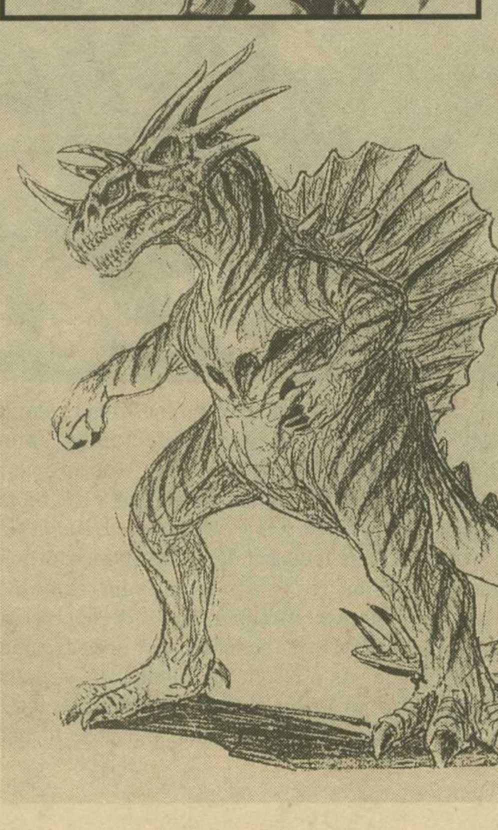
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Daiei's Idol of Terror

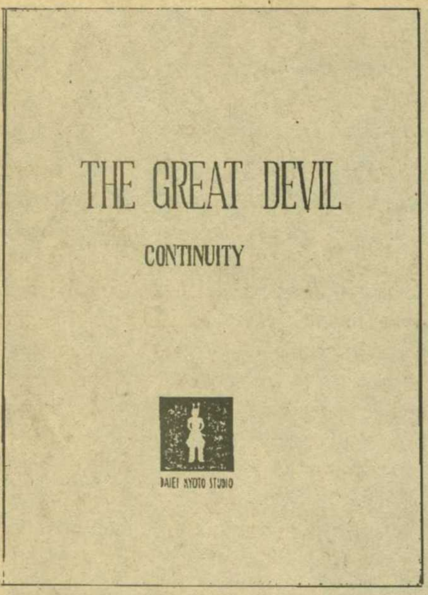
Dai Majin, The Avenging God

by Ed Godziszewski

The year 1966 was a vintage year for Japanese fantasy and science fiction films—the Golden Age of Toho fantasy & science fiction was still in full bloom, with *The Adventures of Taklamakan*, *War of the Gargantuas*, and *Godzilla vs The Sea Monster* all seeing release. Daiei likewise was enjoying a Golden Age of its own, following up on the success of *Gamera* with *Gamera vs Barugon* (*War of the Monsters*) as well as a unique trio of period fantasy films in which the title character was a giant avenging statue called Dai Majin. Each of these films followed the same basic formula...modest production values, the typical samurai drama of evil oppressors vs. innocent commoners, and an avenging god summoned by a desperate plea for help. While simple in concept, the story behind this series contains some surprises.

The idea for a series of films about a huge stone idol coming to life to punish the wicked came to the duo of producer Masaichi Nagata and special effects director Yoshiyuki Kuroda in November of 1965. Interviewed about the genesis of this project, the duo both noted that this concept was obviously inspired by the old French film *The Golem*, its story concerning a human-sized stone idol which came to life to wreak vengeance upon evildoers. However, rather than copy this image, their idea was to translate the story into a Japanese style legend, and as such it would be best to frame the story in the days of feudal Japan when superstition and worship of various god-like images was common. During those days, the Japanese people had a decidedly paganish view of the natural and supernatural...nearly every type of natural phenomenon and (especially) disaster was attributed to some kind of god or "Majin". All things natural had a spirit of sorts behind them, and the most powerful of these spirits were revered as gods. The most well known of these Majin were Huujin, the god of the wind; Raijin, god of thunder and rain; and Hishin, the god of fire, each of which had been depicted numerous times in ancient drawings. The cinematic concept of Dai Majin was derived from this Japanese view of gods, i.e. a supernatural being who controlled or represented forces of nature. However, the traditional images of the gods Huujin, Raijin, and Hishin were decidedly non-cinematic...for example, Huujin was a rotund humanoid who carried a bag on his back which harnessed the wind, Raijin was seen as a squat and balding figure with huge drums from which thunder rumbled. Historically accurate, but hardly appropriate to adapt to the celluloid story of an avenging god. As a result, the filmmakers searched for an image which, while not actually representing a genuine Japanese legend, would be a believable extension of Japanese culture and fill the role of the Golem. Together with designer Ryo Takayama, Nagata and Kuroda settled upon the image of a stone warrior, the basic design of which was taken from ancient clay figures. In addition to the warrior god concept, the creators also borrowed the concept of the statue being buried in the ground from an actual tradition. In ancient times, prior to going off to battle, warriors would bury a small statue of Buddah (or god) in the ground and then pray for good fortune. Aware of this tradition, the filmmakers adapted it by having the people bury a giant statue in the ground and pray to it, replacing the Buddah with the giant warrior as a dramatic device.

What exactly does the name "Dai Majin" mean? While literal translation can be done by most anyone with a good dictionary and some patience, the best result also requires looking beyond the literal to grasp context and intent since literal meaning varies from culture to culture. The most literal way to translate the phrase would be "Evil God" or "Horrible God", while the continuity script for the film uses the English translation "The Great Devil". While technically correct and perhaps best descriptive of the character in first film, in English these translations also create a somewhat misleading image from what the creators intended over the series. 'Evil', 'horrible', and 'devil' all have strong negative connotations, as if the spirit were as evil as the forces which it appeared to vanquish. While they effectively conjure up an image of a god which was feared by the people, when considering the series as a whole an alternate translation such as 'Angry God' may be most appropriate for the character... the gods were always thought to be unhappy or angry at the transgressions of men, hence the reason they would unleash the destructive forces of nature on the



THE GREAT DEVIL

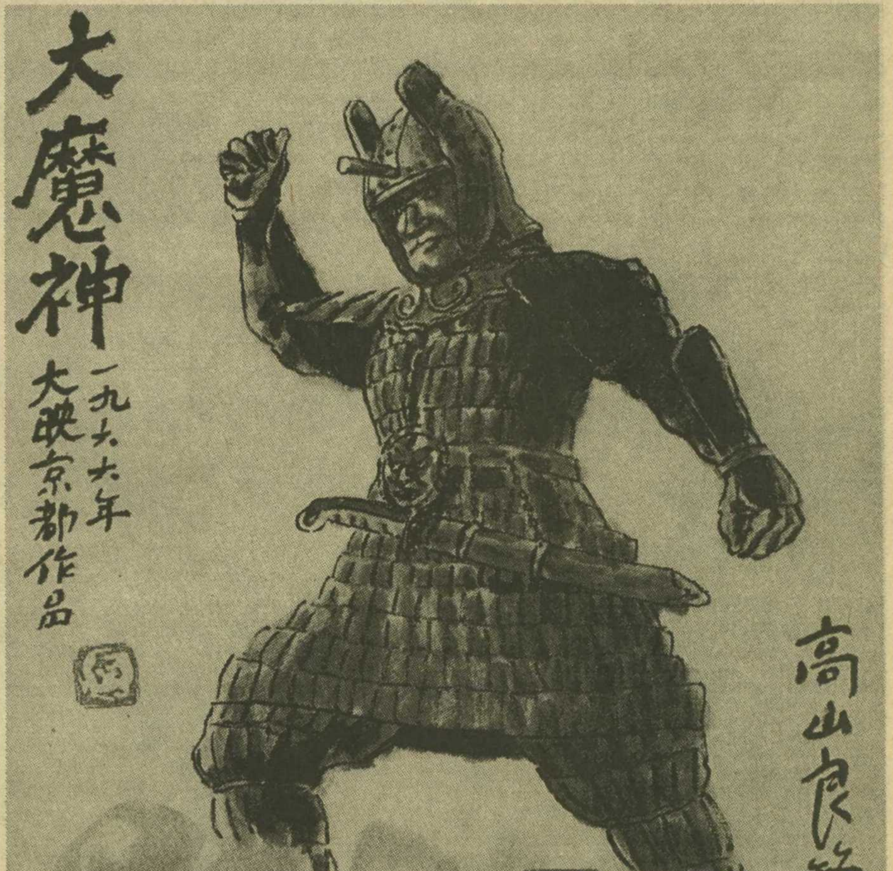
CONTINUITY

DAIEI KYOTO STUDIO

common folk. In the case of the evil lords whom Dai Majin dispatches on film, ample evidence is presented to justify the anger of the god. And if ever there was an angry god, one look at Dai Majin is enough to convince viewers that THIS is one angry god.

True to its inspiration, Majin's appearances and departures depict varying manifestations of nature. The Japanese believed that supernatural spirits inhabited all aspects of nature such as mountains, lakes, forests, etc. Majin is known as the "god of the mountain", a god which was both feared and respected. In the first film, a wind storm and dark clouds herald Majin's appearance, the god's spirit arriving as a fireball. Majin's mastery of the elements is displayed when the idol is encircled by burning wagons...crossing its arms, Majin lowers its gaze and disperses the flames in an instant with a outward sweep of its arms. When its anger has been appeased, Majin's spirit returns to the mountain and the statue disintegrates into dust, returning to the earth from whence it came. While Majin summons an earthquake to open a fiery fissure and swallow up the soldiers who would destroy its statue, the recurrent element in the second film is water. The soldiers succeed in destroying Majin's statue with explosives, its head falling into the lake, but Majin emerges from the water in a magnificently staged scene, parting the waters much like Moses parting the Red Sea. The evil lord attempts to flee in a boat but instead meets his end, crucified and burned to death while surrounded by water. Majin finally returns to its mountain and the statue dissolves into a fountain of water. In the third film, Majin's mastery over nature is overtly demonstrated as the opening montage shows the god, angry at the people, causing various natural catastrophes...floods, drought, earthquakes, storms, blizzards, etc. Majin is also embodied in the form of a falcon which keeps watch over its mountain. The dominant element here is snow, as the vengeful god rises from the snow to spare the life of the young boy who summons him. The snowstorm accompanying Majin's rampage abruptly stops when the god's wrath concludes, and its falcon spirit returns to the mountain while the statue itself transforms into a pillar of snow which billows away into nothingness.

The fact that three separate feature films of Dai Majin were produced and released within a 12 month period is remarkable, not only from the standpoint of the production schedule itself but also from a marketing viewpoint. Though somewhat incomprehensible to today's generation of filmmakers, 3-4 months total to cover conceptualization, scripting, filming, sfx, editing and post production was standard procedure in the Japanese film industry of the 60's. But producing what was essentially three different variations on a single theme within 12 months stands as a unique achievement in this environment. The formula of the Dai Majin series was simple...an evil lord and his men terrorize the populace and threaten them with a grisly kind of death, a death which is instead inflicted on the evil lord after a selfless act of sacrifice succeeds in summoning the statue of the god to life. The quick pace of production for these films was made possible by the fact that substantial portions of each were standard period samurai drama, the kind of film which required little in terms of special preparation. Much like the American Western, natural locations were plentiful and authentic, few special sets were needed, the wardrobe department had a huge stock of costumes available because of the steady procession of such films being produced, and experienced action actors could easily deliver enough well choreographed swordplay to keep audiences entertained. And like so many films of its era, the Majin films had the luxury of solidly competent if unspectacular scripts, allowing the visual payoff to be saved for the last 10


大魔神
一九六六年
大映京都作品
高山良策
TAKAYAMA

Ryo Takayama's concept sketch for the hideous idol, Dai Majin.

minutes of the film. The basic premise of evil oppressing the innocent, but getting its comeupannce at the end, has been tried and true through endless Westerns and samurai films—done so many times, but nonetheless always appealing to the mass audiences. That a fantasy slant on this formula was added was made the Majin films unique.

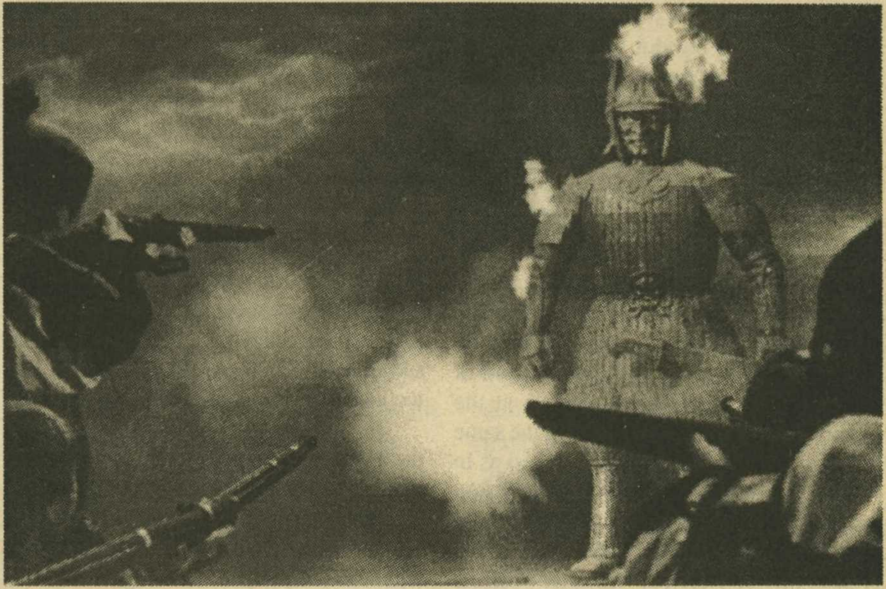
While Majin's purpose was to put evil in its place, it is interesting to note how the god's character changed slightly. In the first film, Majin not only vanquished the evil lord, his rampage continued out of control, even after the villains had been disposed of... as if once unleashed, the god's anger went unchecked. Only the selfless act of the girl who invoked Majin's protection, hurling herself in front of the god to save a boy's life, could appease the god's anger and cause him to stop. The subsequent films toned down the god's demeanor, having him concentrate only on the villains and disappear shortly after they had been terminated. By the third film, Majin actually restores to life the little boy who willingly sacrifices himself to save his fellow villagers.

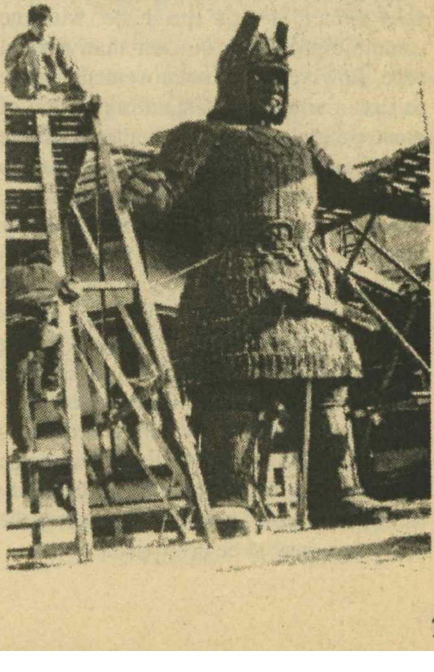
A common plot device for the series was that the chief villain would plan a grisly death for his victims, a death not only prevented by Majin, but also ironically used as the villain's ultimate punishment. The crucifixion of the innocents in the first film is turned on the lord himself as Majin takes the spike from his helmet (driven into the statue in an attempt to destroy it) and impales the lord on the cróss-like remains of his destroyed fort. The second film uses a less obvious yet very dramatic way to dispose of the villain. With the heroine about to be burned and crucified, Majin appears. Though the evil lord attempts to escape in a small boat, Majin follows part way into the lake and halts the boat's progress. A ball of flame hurtles toward the boat, setting it ablaze. The villain desperately climbs the ship's mast to escape the fire, but becomes tangled in the rigging and cross mast, hanging himself crucifixion-style and burning to death...a stunning and powerful image. In the third film, the villain throws one unfortunate soul into a boiling sulfur pit and threatens the rest of his captives with the same fate, but instead it is the lord's lifeless body, run through by Majin's sword, which plunges into the boiling death.

While Eiji Tsuburaya has always garnered fame and notoriety for his

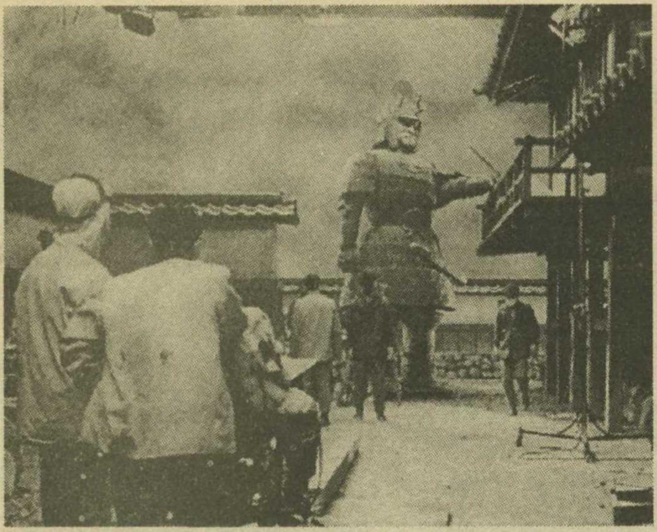
tremendous body of work in pioneering special effects in Japan, other talented individuals also produced fine work in Eiji's shadows. For Daiei, Yoshiyuki Kuroda's efforts on the Dai Majin series yielded special effects which may have gained little attention but take a back seat to none. His flair for dramatic staging, cinematic composition, and incessant attention to minor details are major reasons for the resounding success of the Majin series. With the title character being a modest (in Japanese monster terms) 4.5 meters tall, Kuroda's task in producing convincing effects was made somewhat easier, and he took advantage of this fact to realize the full potential of his subject. Miniatures hardly look like miniatures, the monster interacts effortlessly with the humans...it is often easy to forget that miniature effects were being used at all. Perhaps the only sfx which tend to belie their nature are the matte shots that suffer from blue haloing, a technical limitation of the era. While many sfx directors have been able to excel on the technical side, Kuroda has the rare ability to combine technical excellence with a flair for the dramatic and artistic. The intensity of the god's anger is simply but emphatically made through a series of closeups of Majin's face and posturing of the head. Using an immobile mask with a single grim expression frozen on its face, it was left to suit actor Riki Hashimoto to project a living personality through the costumes's eyes alone. With a simple widening or narrowing of the eyes or a tilting of the head so that the eyes peered from the tops of their eyelids, the range of Majin's expression is both remarkable and compelling, making the stone idol actually seem to emote.

Kuroda concentrates on composition and camera angles which place the audience in the midst of the action...scenes are constructed so that the audience sees Majin as would the characters in the film. An actual size model (4.5 meters tall) of Majin was constructed. Built in individual removable pieces (head, arms, helmet, skirt, legs, etc.), it took one month to assemble. A staff member would be positioned inside of the head and neck so that he could manually operate the eyes, neck, and the right hand from within. At a whopping 300kg, the model's lack of mobility dictated limited use, but judicious use in quick cuts made it seem as if Majin actually was in the midst of swarms of men fleeing for their lives. The prop would slightly turn its head or swing its arm...subtle movements, but enough to make the figure seem lifelike without revealing its nature. The prop was also useful for scenes of Majin passing through crowds...the full size prop would be wheeled just in front of the camera so that only the midsection was visible, while the background would be populated by terror-stricken people. Rather unwieldy due to its

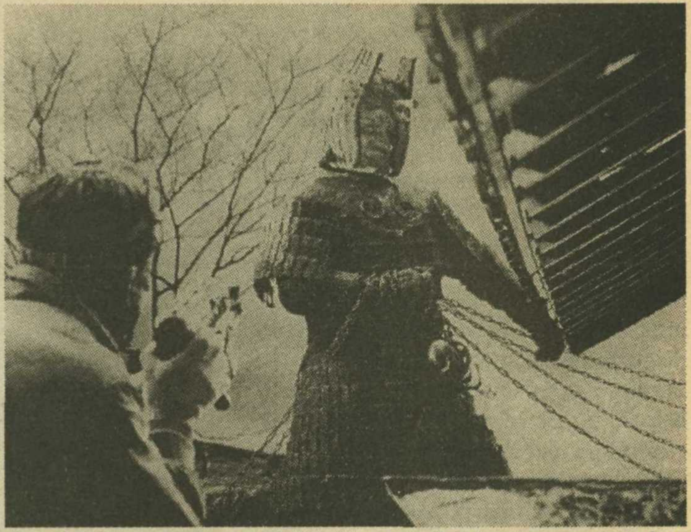




Top: Soldiers swarm around the 4.5 meter model of Majin (*Majin, Monster of Terror*).
Middle: Marksman take aim at the full size prop of Dai Majin in a vain attempt to repel the god (*Return of Giant Majin*).
Bottom Right: The 4.5 meter Majin surrounded by scaffolding so that the staff can assembled and pose the huge model on location (*Majin, Monster of Terror*).
Opposite, Top: A piercing gaze sure to strike fear in the hearts of evil-doers.
Opposite, Bottom: The awe-inspiring entrance of Dai Majin from *Return of the Giant Majin*.



Kuroda's staff readies the 4.5 meter prop for destroying the porch of a building from *Majin, Monster of Terror.*



Kuroda directing suit actor Riki Hashimoto in the chaining sequence from *Majin, Monster of Terror.*

size and slow to curl its fingers around an object was a full size mechanical hand constructed for scenes where an actor was to be grabbed by the idol. With the full-size prop and composition emphasizing a human perspective of Majin, the audience easily buys into the illusion created by the effects.

Miniature work on the series was flawlessly executed, so much so that audiences (especially at the time these films were made) often mistake miniatures for the real thing. Since miniature structures could be built at 1:2.5 scale, realistic structures and details could be easily made...just slightly scaled down versions of the same kind of buildings incessantly being made at the studio for its period dramas. Even the same materials and detailing could be used as in real buildings, their realistic destruction facilitated by the fact that these materials did not behave substantially different in the slightly altered scale. All of Majin's effects were filmed at high speed, i.e. with the camera cranking at quicker than normal pace, slowing down the movements of the suit actor so as to create an impression of great weight and size. Whether it be the toppling of an enormous wall of stone or the trashing of the gate to the villain's fortress, miniatures also crumble more realistically when filmed in this manner. The ultimate in realistic miniature work occurs in the first film where the evil lord's men hurl chains around Majin, hoping to topple the avenging god. Instead, Majin's summons the strength to pull on the chains, causing the entire compound to collapse around him. Wood beams crack and splinter, roofing tiles cascade down from the tops of buildings, all exactly as would happen if full-size structures of the same type were to be destroyed.

Kuroda exhibited a special flair for the dramatic with eye-opening entrances. For Majin's entrance in the second film, Kuroda conjures up an easily identifiable yet spectacular homage to Cecil B. DeMille's dramatic parting of the Red Sea from *The Ten Commandments*. The meaning is obvious...only the awesome power of (a) god could accomplish such a feat. The audience is put back in their seats from the first moment Majin appears. In the third film, Majin eerily rises from beneath the snow amidst an intense energy glow, carrying in his arms the body of the boy who would sacrifice his life to summon the god's protection. The sight is awesome yet touching.

What is especially noteworthy of the Majin films are their total believability in realization of a supernatural force... viewers instantly buy into the premise with its universally appealing scenario and technical excellence. Although the visual element always garners the most attention in films of this type, in the case of Majin, one would be remiss to overlook the prominent role which sound plays in creating its realism and mood. Just as Akira Ifukube's musical style was ideally matched to Godzilla and would come to be inseparable from the character in the minds of the audience, Ifukube's style was likewise perfect for Dai Majin...who else could have done justice to this subject? His themes for the idol itself are both pounding and ponderous, as relentless on the eardrums as is Majin's thundering through any obstacle as he closes in on his victims. Ifukube uses the same basic blaring brass motif for Majin's theme, the theme intensifying for each successive film so that by the third feature, the brass section seems to be playing almost out of control at times. But the real genius of Ifukube in these films was in his ability to produce delicate and moving themes for the human drama which serve as marvelous counterpoint to image of the raging god. That this fierce spirit could be tamed by the mere teardrop of a pure heart is made believable by such brilliant scoring. Also vital to the creation of a realistic and dramatic image, the sound of Majin's thundering footstep was both deep and omnipresent. Never once was the footstep omitted or softened to where it could not be heard, serving as a constant reminder of the nature of the god and his inescapable presence.

Rumors have persisted over recent years about a potential remake of Majin being made, some reports even mentioning Golden Harvest Films and Kevin Costner as a star. While rather dubious sounding on the surface, in today's idea-starved film industry it would not be impossible to imagine. But is a remake really necessary...perhaps not. While 30 years of technological advances have taken place since Majin last was seen on the big screen, little could be improved aside from matte photography, and the basic stories offer little room for new ideas. With Akira Ifukube retired for good, it would be quite difficult to find another capable of the unique and powerful scoring necessary to make such a project work. Perhaps a good Majin film could be made, but it still begs the question as to *why* make another such film. With the idea already seemingly played out to its full potential, rather than a remake that adds nothing new, some fresh ideas instead would be far more welcome in a genre that lately consists of nothing but retreads. Sometimes it is best to leave well enough alone.

REVENGE OF KAIJU BANDSTAND

By Michael Keller

Even as last issue's SON OF KAIJU BANDSTAND went to press, I ran across a few more references to Japanese monsters and super heros in pop/rock music. "Oh well," I thought, "So I missed some, so what?" A couple weeks later I ran across some more examples. I gritted my teeth and cursed myself for not finding them earlier. Then I came across some more, and then still some more. Soon I had enough for yet another installment of this article that simply refuses to die! Will KAIJU BANDSTAND ever run its course? As long as there are rock musicians out there with a taste for the world's finer celluloid offerings, it appears doubtful.

Readers of the previous articles will remember bands going under the names of RODAN, MOTHRA and KING GHIDORAH (as well as an unconfirmed rumor of a Japanese band named GODZILLA). Well, it seems there also happens to exist a band called THE MYSTERIANS. Important question : are they named after the Toho movie or the villains from CAPTAIN SCARLET? (Come to think of it, maybe RODAN named themselves after the artist rather than the monster, hmmmm).

I had said before the only references I found to the Kamen Riders in the rock/pop world were through uses of them in imagery. I am now happy to report the first discovery of a bonafide Kamen Rider rock ditty = "Kamen Rider Love Song" by the hardcore punk band BERSERK. Thank heaven for the loony bin!

In fact, as reported earlier, WHITE ZOMBIE did use some incidental music sampled off KAMEN RIDER ZO in "Electric Head"; and speaking of samples, the band SOUNDGARDEN (who have been spotted wearing Godzilla T-shirts) used a sample of Godzilla's roar on their FOPP/SCREAMING LIFE disc. The infamous SEKIMA-II have more additions in the kaiju-music arena with the song "Made In Japan", the lyrics (In English) ramble off a number of Japanese/pop icons, and Godzilla is mentioned along side things such as samurai, televisions, soy sauce and sumo wrestlers. The band can also go on record as having used samples of Godzilla roars to open their live shows.

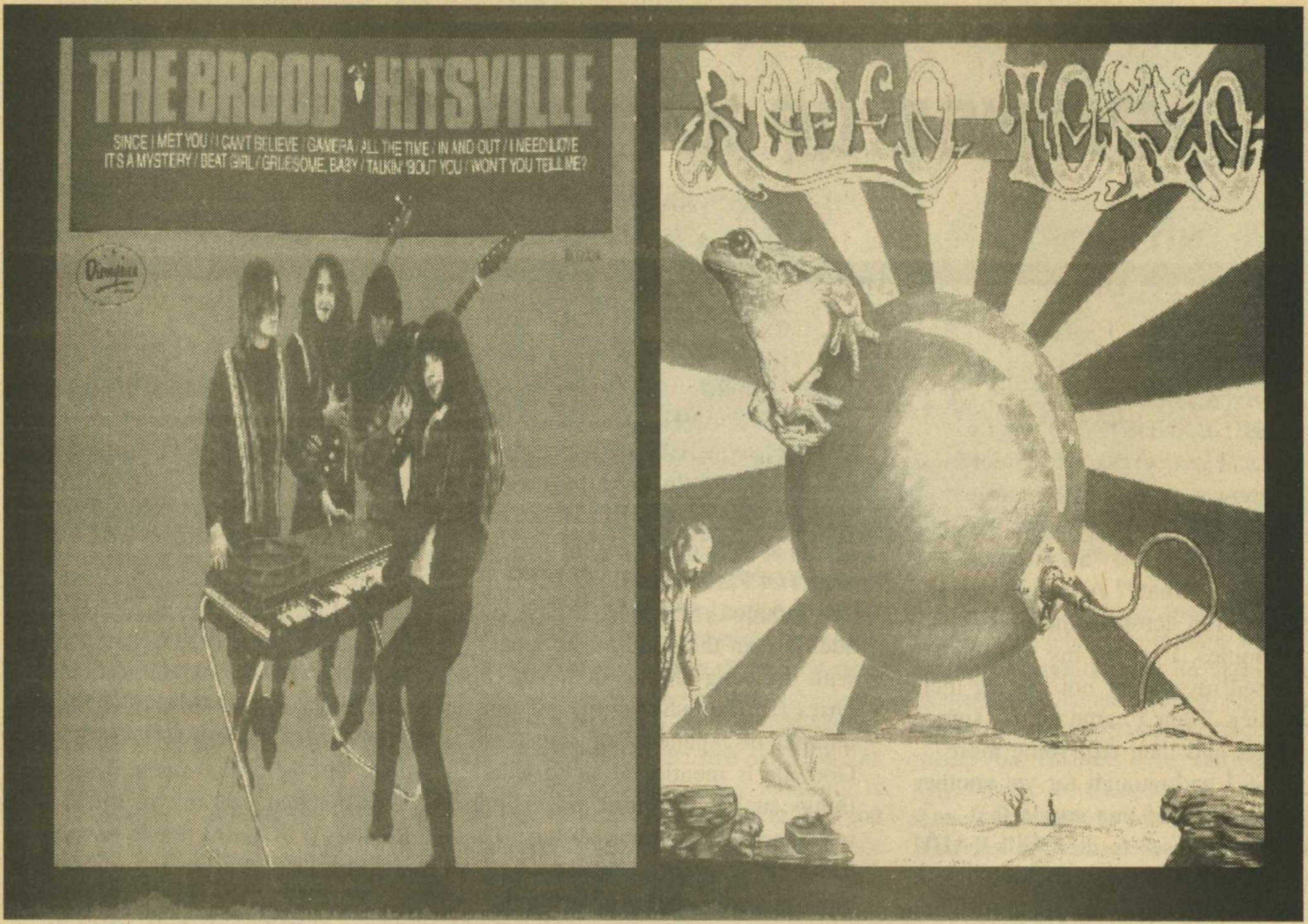
Godzilla continues to make appearances in the world of rock and roll. A photo of the Horizon Godzilla toy graces the cover of the album TERI YAKIMOTO by the band GUTTERMOUTH. The Canadian band RUSH have appeared on stage with Trendmasters Godzilla toys on their latest tour (they also give thanks to Gamera in the liner notes of one of their albums). I have heard accounts of giant inflatable Godzillas showing up at old GRATEFUL DEAD concerts, but I think these were brought in by the fans (one story has the inflatable G beating up an inflatable Gumby). A smaller inflatable radioactive monster can be seen on the back cover of RADIO TOKYO's (kaiju enthusiast Jay Johnson on guitar) discs. This band also does a pretty snazzy cover of BOC's "Godzilla".

Two other songs entitled "Godzilla" have been made known to me, recorded by the bands KING SNAKE ROOST and LIBIDO BOYZ. At least one of these (LIBIDO BOYZ) is an original and not a BOC cover.

But there are still songs which are definitely not covers of anything. The band PRAXIS (featuring "BOOTZILLA" himself, BOOTSY COLLINS) recorded "Giant Robot/ Machines In The Modern City/ Godzilla" on the TRANSMUTATION (MUTATIS MUTANDIS) disc. The epic instrumental incorporates updated versions of the JOHNNY SOKKO theme as well as Ifukube Godzilla music.

AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB did the song "What Godzilla Said To God When His Name Was Not Found In The Book Of Life" (Now THAT's got to be an interesting conversation). TROTSKY ICEPICK gave us "20 Nights With Godzilla" and FUNKCRONOMICON did "Free-Bass (Godzillatron Cush)". HOWARD STERN and ROB ZOMBIE recorded a song for the PRIVATE PARTS soundtrack which makes references to "Monster Zero" and "Planet X". A punk band called THE QUEERS have done a song called "Monster Zero" as well (hmmm, I'm not sure I want to know about this one).

And still the other Japanese monsters make their presence known in the rock arena. MY RED JACKET recorded the jazz instrumental "Rodan Likes Me" (almost certainly the monster, not the artist). "Mothra Has Taken Tokyo" came to us courtesy of SHOW BUSINESS GIANTS. THE HELLCASTERS follow suit with "Mad For Mothra". And THOSE


THE BROOD HITSVILLE
SINCE I MET YOU / I CAN'T BELIEVE / GAMERA / ALL THE TIME / IN AND OUT / I NEED LOVE
IT'S A MYSTERY / BEAT GIRL / GRUESOME, BABY / TALKIN' 'BOUT YOU / WON'T YOU TELL ME?
RADIO TOKYO

HITSVILLE by THE BROOD and RADIO TOKYO, two examples of kaiju rock music.

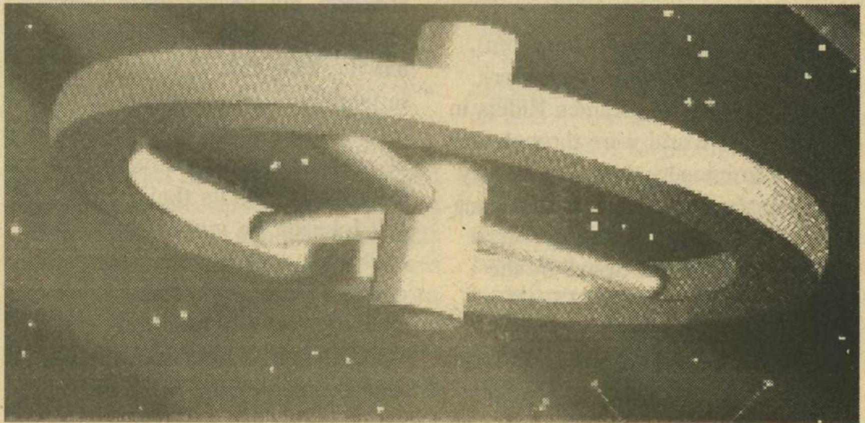
DARN ACCORDIONS! have the simply titled "Mothra". The band QUICKSAND recorded "Brown Gargantuan" (sic) and MENTALLO AND THE FIXER join in with "Gargantua".

Lest he be forgotten, Tsuburaya's hero from M78 still has a claim staked out in rock and roll territory. This time his representation comes via the band PLUM and their song "Ultraman" on the disc NEPTUNE'S DAUGHTERS.

It seems also that Daiei's genre hero is making his presence known in the rock/pop world, and, it seems, with one familiar to the concept. BLUE OYSTER CULT's (famous for you know what) guitarist BUCK DHARMA recorded the rock instrumental "Gamera Is Missing" as his contribution to the GUITAR'S PRACTICING MUSICIANS album.

And last but certainly not least comes the simply titled "Gamera" by the four lovely ladies (Well, Asch is lovely anyway) of THE BROOD on their HITSVILLE album. Cute chick garage music tames the savage flying turtle.

Well, that's it for this outing. Will there be another KAIJU BANDSTAND? The answer to that, and much more will be waiting in MAT #8. Until then, let's take a closer look at a band that have probably done more then any other to promote Japanese live action:



MAN OR ASTRO-MAN?

Anyone who read the articles KAIJU BANDSTAND and SON OF KAIJU BANDSTAND in the last two issues will recall the group MAN OR ASTRO-MAN?, the surf rock band that took their name from Toho's HUMAN VAPOR and incorporates samples, imagery, etc from both Japanese and American science fiction media on their records and in their live performances. At a recent gig in Dallas, I caught up with the only touring band from outer space currently on this planet. For the uninformed, the band is made up of Coco the Electronic Monkey Wizard on guitar, Captain Zeno on bass, Starcrunch on guitar and the occasional vocal, and Birdstuff on drums. The following interview started with Birdstuff and Starcrunch in a parking lot literally over run with millions of chirping crickets, looking quite like a scene out of a '70's b-movie and adding a very appropriate atmosphere. Now sit back, put your space helmet on, and secure all levels at zero. We're about to blast off.

MIKE: How long have MAN OR ASTRO-MAN? been around in earth years?

STARCRUNCH: Infinity plus. It just feels like that.

BIRDSTUFF: Infinity and then some? No, actually for a long time it was 3.14 years, which was a constant.

S: Four years.

B: Ah, there, that was very nice. That was very succinct of you.

M: And these are all four original members? Or have there been line-up changes since the inception?

B: There was... how many different utility outfielders have we had strumming a rhythm guitar? I lose count.

S: Five or six. We have a rotating member.

B: There's been so many. How could you even calculate them?

S: We forget.

B: We have to have someone to abuse. We should just get a rubber blow-up rhythm guitar player.

S: Right, and sequence all the tracks.

Birdstuff, trying to be funny

(At this point in the interview a cricket jumped on Birdstuff, much to his surprise.)

S: That was an attack by a cricket!

M: People are throwing crickets at us, it seems.

B: Look at this! This is insane.

M: They're mating, I think. I don't know.

S: They tried mating on him.

B: It's a sign of God.

M: Or something like that, yeah.

B: No no no. It is a sign of God. I was just reading about this.

S: When Jupiter's in line with Venus, the female cricket's ovaries are much larger, and they attract more male crickets.

B: And you know way too much about crickets.

M: Well, anyway, in those 3.14 years that were going on forever that you guys have been around you've released quite a few things. There are bands that have been around maybe two or three times that long who...

B: Like who? Name somebody.

M: Uh, I don't know...

B: Like THE BLUE NILE, who have done three records in twelve years?

M: But you've gotten quite a bit out in the short time you've been

around. Exactly how hard would you say you guys work?

S: Your earth time is not the same as our time, so we can put out twice as much stuff in the same time that your average earth band would put out the same amount.

B: Is that was Jeff said in FAST TIMES AT RIDGEMONT HIGH to Mr. Ham?

S: Yes.

M: Well, for a band that's still playing clubs, it's a pretty elaborate stage show you put on. About how much did all that stuff cost you?

B: Probably about $107, something like that.

S: And 28 cents.

B: And 28 cents. Not very much. What we haven't stolen we've gotten for very cheap so we don't have very much invested into it.

M: Do you pick up new stuff along the way?

S: Where do you live?

S & B: Do you have a TV?

M: Not one that you can use. I only have one and I need that one. I have to watch Godzilla movies on it.

B: Well, you're right here. Starcrunch is right here. I'm right here. Is there anybody at your house right now?

M: Yeah.

B: Well, Coco will be in for a surprise because we thought it was empty.

M: Well, what's the closest you've come to dying on stage?

B: The closest I've come to dying was in, um... where was that city? Omaha! And I fell off the stage backwards, hit my head, and I was knocked out, and everything was wet, just covered in water underneath the stage; and Coco lit the Tesla coil and the stage was made out of metal and I thought I was going to fry but I didn't. And I passed out and they found me about two minutes later.

S: The closest I've come to dying is in Las Vegas. We played a club that was not properly grounded and I happened to stand up on a TV; and at the same moment I stood up on the TV that was six feet off the ground at least, I felt a tremendous thump in the back of my head signifying a large electrical shock.

M: It's interesting because that exact same thing happened to Kenpuchiro Satsuma who is the actor who plays Godzilla. During the filming of GODZILLA VS BIOLLANTE there was a loose electrical wire in the back of his suit and the exact same thing happened to him.

S: It's a tremendous feeling.

M: He said he felt like somebody was kicking him in the back of the head.

B: See, at least he was grounded with a rubber suit, though. Starcrunch didn't have that.

S: I was worried about the fans underneath me.

M: What's the most spontaneous fun thing that's ever happened, that wasn't too dangerous?

B: I would have to say getting to jam with ZZ. That was a thrill.

M: When was that?

B: That was in Austin the last time we played. They were at the show. I guess ZZ TOP are like big MAN OR ASTRO-MAN? fans. They came up to Emo's to see us play. We got to do a little jam on "Fandango".

M: And do you get along with those guys well?

B: Uh, it's kind of weird. I don't know. I mean, seeing those guys like on MTV and then like, you know, these fucking 50 year old guys with beards coming out to your show. You know, it's kind of scary. But yeah, that was the biggest thrill. And then the scariest thing was a guy in France playing the therimen with his penis.

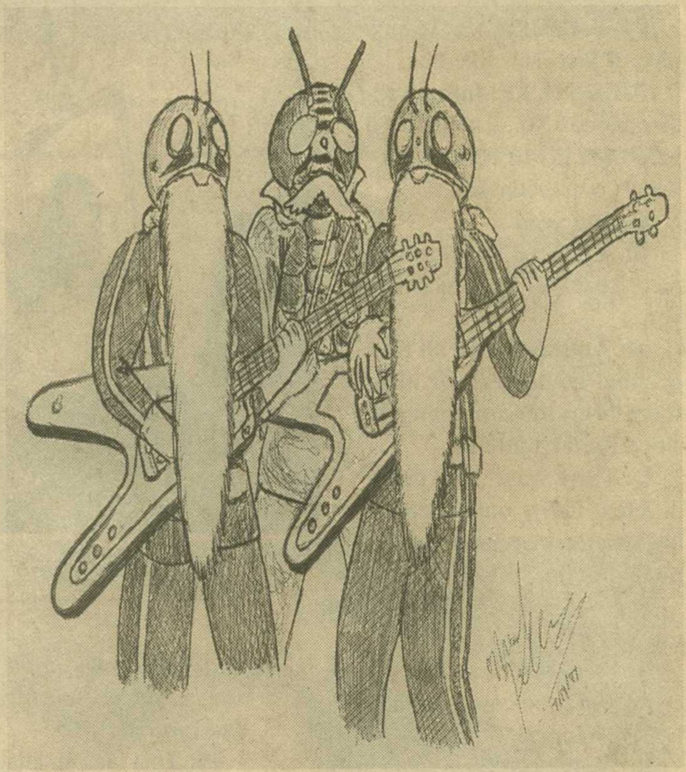
M: Playing a what?

B: Playing Coco's therimen with his appendage. *(The therimen has been used by popular music bands from THE BEACH BOYS to FRANK ZAPPA).*

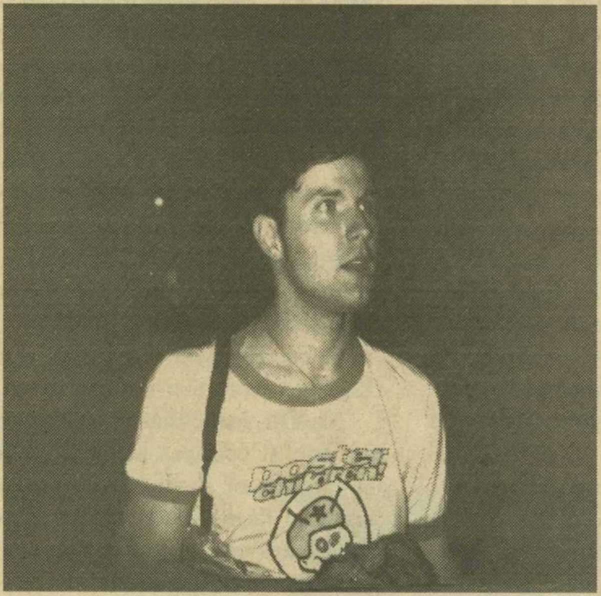
M: That sounds like an IMPOTENT SEA SNAKES show.

B: This guy wasn't impotent, though. I know for a fact.

M: Now on your records and discs and other recording devices that you have, you use a lot of samples from different sci-fi movies, television and radio shows and so forth. How do you go about getting material for samples and are copyrights really a hassle? Or should we even say?



ZZ Rider, ready for action



Birdstuff, trying not to look like an alien

Starcrunch, wondering how much of this I'm buying

S: We're from space, your laws don't apply to us.

B: Yeah, once it gets... what is the atmosphere of earth? Like just eight, ten miles? Once it gets out there it's, you know...

S: We record everything above the earth's surface and that's our little... that's how we get out of all your legal red tape.

B: Everything is public domain in outer space.

M: So we should say that everything you use is public domain?

B: No, that would not be true. But we have an earth person who takes care of us in this sense.

M: Here's an important question = what's cooler, science fiction or rock and roll?

B: I don't think either one of those things are very cool. And to us your science fiction is science fact because it's so much like outer space. I think you guys have hit the proverbial head of the nail right on with THE OUTER LIMITS and such TV shows. It's so reminiscent of our home grid sector that it almost brings a tear in my eye to hear the control voice in the opening credits of THE OUTER LIMITS. Starcrunch?

S: I think it's a permutation of both of them; of a rocking science and a rolling fiction.

M: I like Starcrunch's answer better.

B: I was delving into FRAGGLE ROCK at that point.

M: One thing I noticed about you guys is that you're really cool to your fans. You hang out after the show and meet everybody. Birdstuff even bought some water for me.

S: Well, this isn't really us. This is our clones.

B: The clones are really fucking nice.

M: I guess what they want to know is will you still remember everyone after you get bigger than you already are?

S: What was your name again?

M: Mike

S: Mike, yes. Yes we will.

B: Well, Terry, I'll tell you this, we just care about who comes out. Because they're the kids and we got to take care of the kids. Because we only play for the disabled.

S: That was the worst answer of this interview.

B: No it wasn't, that was the best!

B: Everybody there had a disability of some sort if you noticed. The whole front row was...

M: There was a poor girl I saw who had inflamed chest muscles, and it brought me to tears just to see that.

B: Did it really?

M: Yeah.

B: I didn't see that.

M: Now, what made you guys get into surf rock as opposed to other forms of rock and roll and earth music. Why surf rock instead of fusion polka or light grunge or something?

B: I thought we did do fusion polka.

S: I thought it was light grunge.

B: You were doing grunge. See, we were all playing different songs. The reason why it probably sounds like surf rock, surf music is because... somebody's about to wash our cars.

(At this point in the interview we were approached by a homeless man with a bottle of windex who offered to wash our car windows. We declined the offer but I gave him thirty cents and Starcrunch pitched in twenty two. Birdstuff had no pockets and therefore no spare change. Duly satisfied with our kindness, the man went away.)

M: And we will be printing this part as well.

B: So there's lots of extraneous tidbits. It's like interview bonus tracks. I like how you guys told him how much you were giving him. That was classy.

M: Now why were you saying it sounds like surf rock?

B: It's a satellite transmission time delay. We're receiving television and radio transmissions from the planet earth that were about thirty years behind and we thought we were completely current. So if we had just synched up a little better we could have done grunge or, as you have predicted, fusion polka.

M: Well, the last time you guys were here I talked to Captain Zeno about the studio you guys record at in Alabama when you're here on earth, is it Alabama?

B: That is the planet.

S: We call it the heart of Dixie.

B: You know "The Heart Of Rock And Roll" by HUEY LUIS?

B: Originally titled?

S: "I Met A Fan Dancer On The South Side Of Birmingham."

B: No no no. It was "The Heart Of Dixie."

S: That was a good reference.

M: But the name of that studio, Zero something, what's it called?

S: Zero Return.

(At this point in the interview, we were approached by a roadie who told us it was time to load up the rest of the band's gear. The remainder of the conversation with Birdstuff took place on the stage of The Galaxy Club as he packed away his drum equipment. Also on hand was Coco The Electronic Monkey Wizard, who was putting away his own toys and who every so often would venture into microphone range to offer up his own two bits of space wisdom.)

M: So I was asking you about that studio. Is there a reason why you're always recording there?

B: It has the largest amount of sweet tea in the known universe. In fact, during the recording of EXPERIMENT ZERO, we consumed over one hundred gallons of sweet tea. That is a very true to life fact.

M: So that's why all your American albums in any case are done there as opposed to somewhere else?

B: Yes.

Coco: Hey you! Look out, you! Get away from that thing!

M: Oh yeah, that is a dangerous one. (Coco was warning me of the dangers of standing too close to a bizarre Jacob's ladder-type device that always ends a MAN OR ASTRO-MAN? performance. He then proceeded to test the object which emits huge charges of visible artificial lightning.)

M: Were you having some trouble with this thing tonight? Only one part of it was going off.

B: No, probably not. Probably just one was closer and was arching to the most friendly tube. But now he's experimenting with two hundred volts of electricity and an M-80 firecracker.

M: So why is it that you have so many albums out on Estrus and some on foreign labels?

B: The way Estrus is set up, they don't license their records to the other continents of your planet. So instead of just not having stuff out in other countries, we just doubled up and hit another dimension and recorded alternate universe albums. But not any more.

M: So everything's going to be on Estrus now?

B: No no no. The Mother Ship album's come out on Touch And Go now. But we're still doing EPs with Estrus.

M: Can you tell us about the origin of the name MAN OR ASTRO-MAN?, and what earth film that comes from?

B: Yeah, I'll tell you. Originally, it comes from a being we saw outside the trailer we practice at in

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Auburn, Alabama. One night we were there, practicing late, honing our craft, when we saw a flashing light coming through the trailer window. And then we went outside and a glowing beam of light shone down upon us. And all of the sudden this luminous being, this astro-man, was before us; and suddenly, in an instant, he turned into this glowing luminescent space dust. We were, at that point, pretty fucking scared, didn't know what to make of it; and all we were left to ask ourselves was "Is it man, or astro-man?" And ironically, the very next day, we found out that it was also in the movie trailers of THE HUMAN VAPOR, which was basically this crappy Toho love story about some Japanese guy that gets the power to form himself into a fart, gaseous type and is really obsessed with this ballerina chick and kills people for her.

M: And is there any possibility of maybe doing soundtracks in the future? Now that ASH and DEVO are doing songs for Jackie Chan films, maybe you can do something for Monster Island productions or something similar?

B: Yeah, we've done several things, and we have various things coming up that we are doing. I can't divulge all those right now. But we have done various things for the Cartoon Network and some different corporations at this point. But we'll be putting ourselves...

C: We did a big thing for Nabisco.

B: General Mills. I'm not wearing that fucking Keebler Elf's suit one more fucking time!

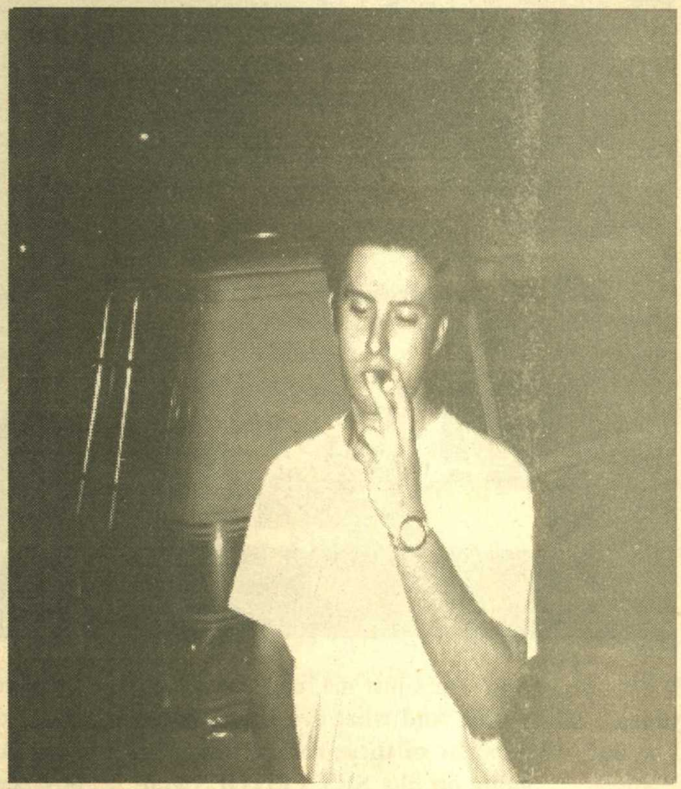
C: I don't care. I'll do it. I'll do anything for money.

B: I am not fucking swirling around that fucking barrel of fudge stripe chocolate!

M: What are your thoughts on Tri-Star and Emmerich and Devlin, who did STARGATE and INDEPENDENCE DAY, doing the Tri-Star Godzilla film?

B: I think that is going to be very miserable. I think both STARGATE and INDEPENDENCE DAY were probably two of the most masochistic cinematic torture sessions I have ever endured. What's ID4 even mean?

C: Yeah, what is that ID4? Why did they put in the 4?



Coco, will he ever see his google-plex ply?

M: I've wondered that as well, actually.

B: I peed on an ID4 hat in Los Angeles.

M: So you're not looking forward to their interpretation of that legend, then?

B: No, not by any means. I would much rather leave it in the hands of the fine folks at Toho. But, however, I think the fine folks at Toho want to make some money, and have found a way to do so through Tri-Star. So it's a very very strange duality and dichotomy at the same time.

M: I noticed the last time you were here and this time as well you were playing YONGARY, MONSTER FROM THE DEEP on the television screen. It seems like that film's gone through quite a bit of wear. I guess you've been playing it at every date and and now it's barely even recognizable.

B: Well, you know, actually that's not true at all. The only reason why some of our films were scrambled tonight is 'cause we are violating FCC codes by transmissions. Coco has made all the VCRs wireless so we're actually broadcasting on stage. Tell him about our transmission process, Coco.

C: No!

B: Why?

C: 'Cause he could be with the FCC.

B: We will never get in trouble for that, I'm serious. Are you really scared about it?

C: Me?

B: Yeah.

C: Well, I'll just say this, MAN OR ASTRO-MAN? is probably currently breaking about fifteen different FCC regulations, not to mention fire codes...

B: All for $40 at Science Surplus from Chicago, Illinois.

C: Underwriter Laboratories can kiss my ass.

B: And General Insurance.

C: And General Health Insurance.

M: So what's the biggest influence for you guys musically and the biggest influence as far as film and television goes?

C: The biggest influence musically I think would have to be pulsars.

B: Just the whole SETI thing in general.

C: Trying to avoid those guys?

B: Yeah, man. They're fucking... What was that? Did Carl Sagan draw that fucking picture of that fat chick in there, in the Voyager thing?

C: No, you know, Carl Sagan's busy. You know why? I gave him specific plans. I told him "You need to make me a roll of toilet paper that counts out a google plex." And he's working on it right now. He's still drawing zeros.

B: A google plex ply?

C: A google plex ply.

(NOTE: This interview took place before the untimely passing of Carl Sagan. It is not known whether he finished Coco's google plex ply before his death or not.)

M: So as far as movies and TV shows go, what's the best one?

C: The pinnacle, the zenith, the quasar?

B: The apex of cinematic viewing? What one science fiction extravaganza would I rather see than anything else?

Roadie: FULL HOUSE!

B: FULL HOUSE? Anything with the Olsen twins would be my normal answer. But, I don't know. I'd have to say Jack Arnold's SPACE CHILDREN. Just because of the luminescent...

C: SPACE CHILDREN?!

B: That's what you are! Star child. Your parents were fucking space hippies. Named you fucking wizard!

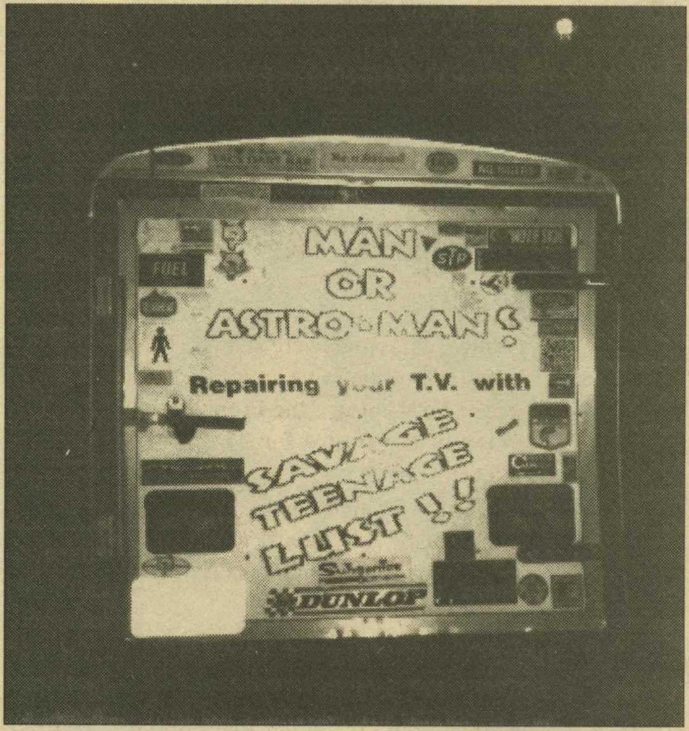
C: Shut up!

B: You got wizard in your name!

C: Good.

M: There's some animosity on the fandom scene between fans of Japanese live action stuff and fans of anime. What's your whole take on that? Do you prefer one to the other?

B: I'm much more into live action then I am into Japanese animation. I would much rather see a couple guys beating the shit out of each other in rubber suits and having some good, clean fun then I would like to see some fucking demon from the 14th dimension shoving a fucking flaming hot baseball bat up some chick's pussy. And that's just me, call me naive.



M: And what are your thoughts on some of these rock reunions going on like SEX PISTOLS and KISS?

B: I can not understand why people are looking so far into the past when you have the future right here at hand. It was very sad when we were just over in Europe, it was like LYNNRD SKYNRD, which i thought all those guys fucking died, SEX PISTOLS. You know, I don't know, all the fucking punk rock bands. CHELSEA, BUZZCOCKS, everybody's back together. Sometimes it's nicer just to die.

C: (to me) Are you tired?

M: I never tire.

C: (Shouting in a fake oriental accent) Good! 'Cause some time you sleep forever! Some day you sleep forever!

B: Hey, that's like harkening back to Industrial Design, is it not? What's up with that? You think he's going to go to Auburn?

C: Do over! Do interview over! Completely over! Do over!

M: Speaking of rock reunions, would you happen to be from around the same area of the universe as Ace Frehley's home planet?

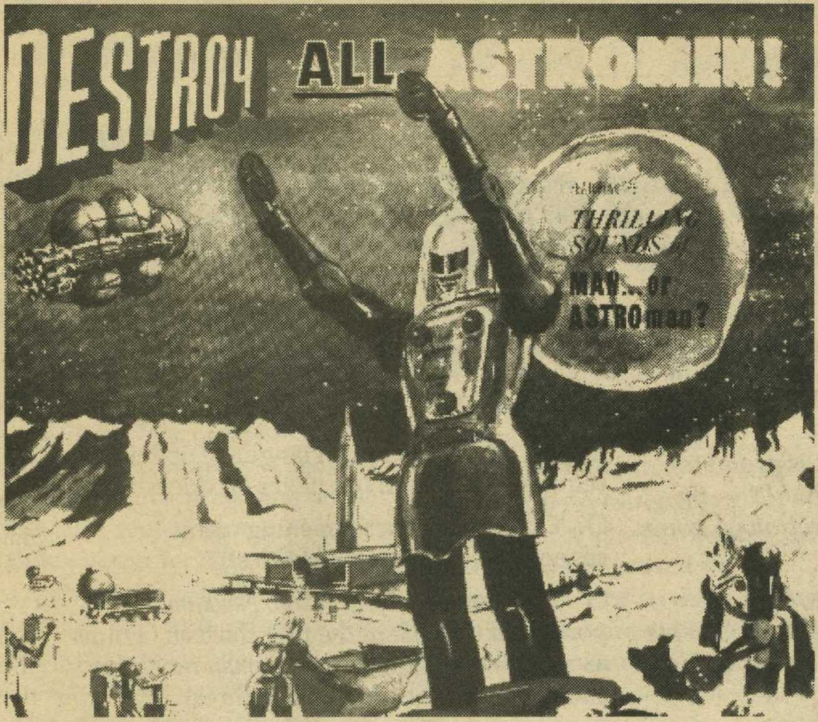
B: Um, very possibly. I must say, though, that we have no affiliation with KISS because we have tried to wear their outfits and their outfits weigh more then we do. You know, those boots of Gene Simmons' are fifteen pounds each.

M: You use both Japanese and American science fiction influences on your records and in your stage shows. Which do you prefer, Japanese or American?

B: Um, I don't know. I can't really say. I would say that we have such a great tradition here in the United States Of America for just sheer camp. But, I don't know. Japanese stuff; guys that are like half fucking tall boy beer, half crab; robots with fucking hair growing out of their head... You've got to give them credit where credit is due.

M: Can you tell us a little bit about your excursions to Toho studios and also to Tsuburaya studios where they make ULTRAMAN?

B: That was probably the biggest thrill that I will ever have on the planet earth. In fact, I think those two studios, aforementioned by you will probably be the only two places on earth left that we will not devastate. I don't know, I think we might be relocating. We're


DESTROY ALL ASTROMEN!
THRILLING SOUNDS of MAN... or ASTROman?

relocating to Cambodia.

M: What sort of stuff did you do at Toho?

B: Um, I controlled the remote control Rodan.

M: Really? The one used in the last MECHAGODZILLA?

B: Yes, but, I don't know. I couldn't get him to smash into this one building. He kept on trying to go down low in between the power lines.

M: It's good you didn't do that. They might have gotten pissed off at you.

B: Oh, yeah yeah yeah. 'Cause they're rather particular with their models, so I would hate to have destroyed a perfectly good Rodan.

M: And what sort of stuff did you do at Tsuburaya?

B: Man, I hung out and became one of those... what are the black ninja guys from SPACE GIANTS?

M: Lugo Men. But SPACE GIANTS was actually P Productions, not Tsuburaya.

B: Yeah, but they had all the suits there. They had all the, whatever the Japanese word is for SPACE GIANTS, they had it all there. Which was about as cool as seeing the ULTRAMAN stuff. 'Cause I think some of the props were shared. They had some of the same stuff.

M: So what are the immediate plans in the future for MAN OR ASTRO-MAN?

B: To go home and win a gold medal in the Olympics. Just bringing the gold home to space is my next goal.

M: To end this thing, I guess we'll talk about MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000, which is now back on the Sci-Fi Channel. The movie has been shown, it's done pretty well. Some fans of Japanese stuff, though, don't really like it because they think it's irreverent. Your thoughts?

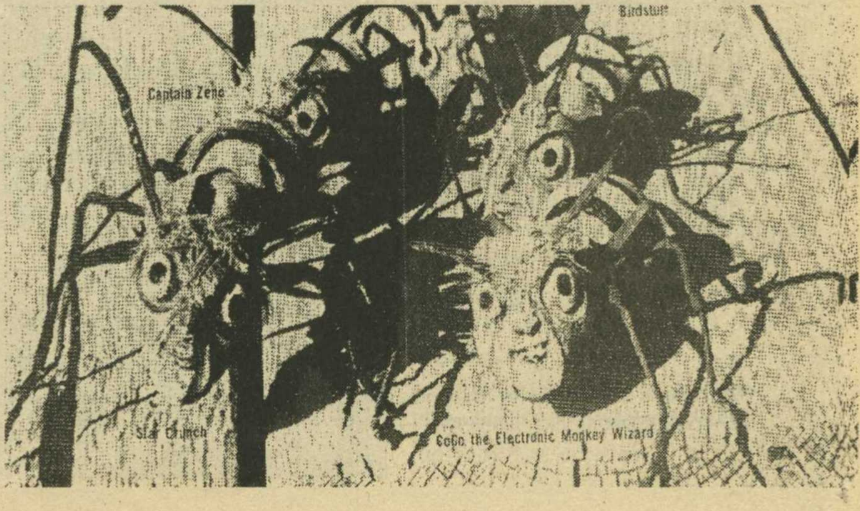
B: I think that is the most ridiculous, fucking moronic stupid point of view that anyone could take on MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER. I think the greatest thing about b-movies is to realize just how fucking ridiculous they are to begin with and that these people who were making these films were doing it for the sheer fun of it and I think they would probably not feel like their art was being poked fun at by somebody that's just enjoying the movie and how wacky it is. I think that is very very sad for somebody to feel that way. To me, the whole thing is if they weren't doing it, everybody that is in the room that's watching the movie should be.

M: Well, that's exactly the sort of thing that made ROCKY HORROR popular.

B: Yeah, exactly, exactly. So, I mean... I don't know. I can't understand that at all.

M: Well, on that note we'll have to end this interview. Thank you very much Mr. Birdstuff for allowing me to waste some of your precious quality time.

MAN OR ASTRO-MAN?, coming soon to a galaxy near you! Keep a look out in your local music paper for the astro invasion and keep watching the skies!



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Ultraman Episodes 26 and 27 Synopses

by Kevin Grays

Kaiju Denka(Monster Highness) Part 1

A young boy named Osamu is totally fascinated by monsters to a point of obsession. He likes to wear a mask that he made of the monster Gango(from episode 11; The Mischievous Rascal From Space) and his drawings and paintings of monsters show much promising talent. Other kids sometimes tease and belittle Osamu for his interests. Even his mother would like to encourage Osamu to pursue other more conventional hobbies. Recently Osamu has been adopting the name, Kaiju Denka (literally his Monster Highness, Creature King, or Grand Monster). Meanwhile , on the South Pacific Johnson Island, an expedition is tracking the evidence of a creature from the Gomorasaurus family that may have never become completely extinct from the face of the earth. Joining the search is the Science Special Search Party(Science Patrol) officer Arashi. When the monster is discovered it becomes a subject of controversy for the modern world and the UN encourages a plan for the capture and study of the beast which is named Gomora. The Science Search Party is sent to tranquilize and transport the creature, but the dosages wear off during travel and the rare creature must be released. It is presumed that it will plummet to its death on the ground below. However, the vast strength of this beast has been drastically underestimated. Gomora regains consciousness, unharmed, but now loose in Japan.

Osamu has been following the story and news reports of Gomora. Impressing his fellow classmates with his knowledge of the creature, the young Kaiju Denka comes to gain their respect and admiration instead of more ridicule. However, the wild Gomora, which even the advanced weapons of the Science Patrol are unable to stop, becomes a dangerous threat as the possibility comes closer that it may reach a populated area. Even more frightening to the people of Japan, Gomora has the ability to burrow underground through many tons and miles of solid rock. When it disappears beneath the earth, no one knows where or when it will resurface next.

When Gomora does emerge, it approaches a populated area where Osamu and a friend are playing. Ultraman arrives in time to stop the creature before anyone can get killed, However, even he is not aware of the incredible strength of this monster. Trying to subdue the beast rather than killing it, Ultraman is brutally beaten and almost knocked unconscious by the monster. Even worse, during the battle, the Beta Capsule is lost!

Kaiju Denka Part 2

Having returned underground, Gomora has Japan in a grip of fear as to where it will strike next. Gomora possesses no apparent mutant powers or abilities and seems like a naturally evolved animal that had gone as of yet undiscovered. The extreme strength of Gomora makes it just as dangerous, if not even more so, than other foes of Ultraman to the defense forces. Eventually Gomora returns to the surface and this time in a major metropolitan area. The defense forces try to stop the destructive rampage of the creature and the Science Patrol finally succeed in wounding the monster, blowing off its tail. But even the severed tail of Gomora thrashes about with a violent force of survival. Before the injured Gomora can retreat underground, the Science Patrol fires a tracking device into the beast transmitting a signal showing Gomora moving towards the Osaka Castle landmark area.

Desperate defense strategies are put into immediate operation, but all attempts to save the national treasures of Osaka castle fail. Osamu, having found the Beta Capsule, turns it over to the Science Patrol's Hayata. Ultraman can now be summoned, this time aware that he must destroy the creature.

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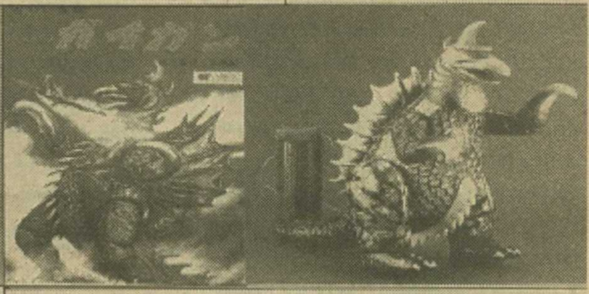

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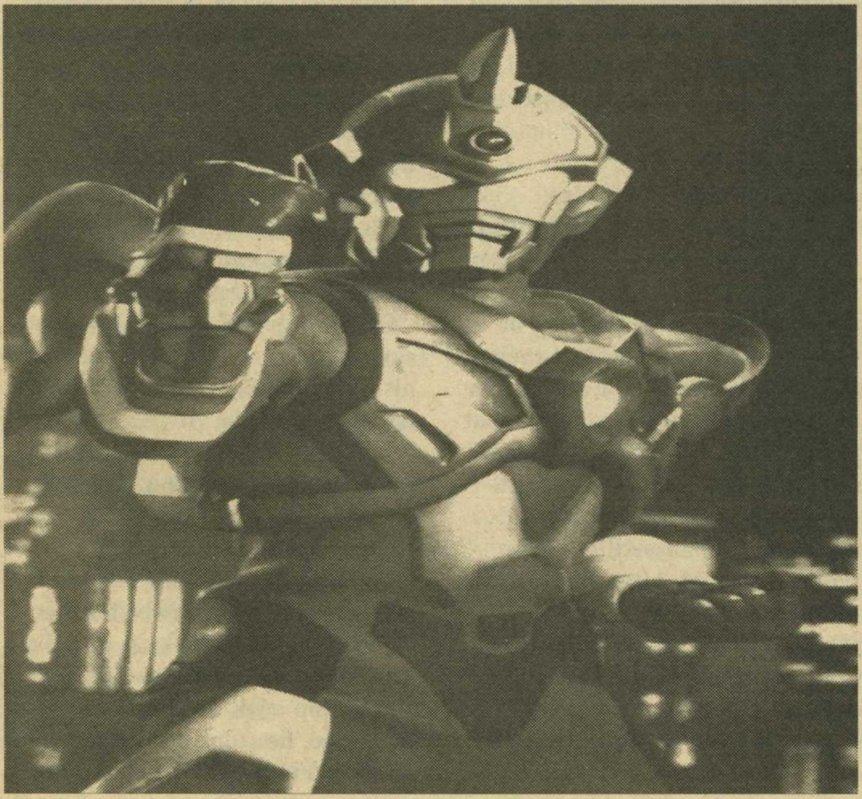
Gridman: Hyper Agent vs. Computer Virus Monsters!

by: Bob Johnson



With Ultraman Tiga taking Japan by storm and a second Ultraman Zearth film out in Japanese theaters, I thought it would be a good idea to look back on a recent Tsuburaya series that laid some of the groundwork for the effects and ideas used in the newer Ultra series, but almost forgotten now that fans have their old Ultra friend back. So, even if you consider yourself the world's biggest Ultraman fan, do not forget some of the gems that came out between the more popular Ultra brothers. It is always a good departure to sit and enjoy shows like Mirrorman, Fireman, Jumborg Ace and yes, Gridman.

Today, more than ever, computers control almost every aspect of our lives. Even if you do not own a computer, they still have an effect on you every day. Whether you are waiting at a traffic signal, buying something at a grocery store, running water from your tap or turning on an electric light, directly or indirectly, everything is somehow controlled by a computer. So, how better to take over the world than by controlling computers? This is the premise of Tsuburaya Productions; teleseries Electric Light Super Human Gridman. Gridman is different and unique in concept and design. It also turned out to be one of the better superhero shows of the 90s so far. The series was originally to be called Bigman, but luckily was changed once it went into production.

The series starts off with three teenage computer hackers, Naoto Sho, Yuka Inoue and Ippei Baba, as they put together their own computer using scraps and pieces that they buy piece by piece with their allowances. Once their computer, nicknamed "Junk", is completed, Ippei uses the computer's graphics program to draw a guardian for the computer. This guardian he calls "Denkou Choujin" which means "Electric Light Super Human" or "Gridman" for short.

In the meantime, Takeshi Todo, a classmate of theirs is also a computer genius, however he is a loner. Looking and acting like a stereotypical Otaku, Takeshi thinks the whole world rejects him. He keeps to himself, not speaking to anyone. He lives in his own world of computers and software. In his house is a room full of the latest computer equipment and shelves full of software. His one link to reality is a crush he has on Yuka. One day he imagines Yuka is ignoring him when he tries to pass her a love letter. This enrages him so much, that in his own warped sense of reality, he plots his revenge on Yuka and her friends.

Thinking that Yuka prefers Naoto to him, he sends a computer virus into a computer in a hospital owned by Yuka's family and where Naoto's brother Daichi is being operated on for an appendicitis. As his plan takes hold, and the hospital is in a panic, a massive bolt of electric energy, created by his intense emotions leaps from him and enters his computer. This energy releases the evil phantom Kahndegifur, a multi dimensional criminal from the Hyper World. Kahndegifur gives Takeshi's computer virus life as a monster and sends it into the hospital computer to wreak more chaos.

Yuka, Ippei and Naoto rush to their computer to tap into the hospital system and see what is wrong. They discover the monster, Girarus creating havoc in the hospital's computers. Naoto, in a moment of desperation, releases a bolt of emotional energy of his own that enters Junk. Whereas Takeshi's energy bolt was created through hate and anger, Naoto's was created from courage and a desire to help his brother. The energy brings to life Gridman, and he and Naoto physically combine inside the computer and travel via modem line to the hospital computer to defeat Girarus and save the hospital and Naoto's brother.

In future episodes, Takeshi and Kahndegifur continue to create computer virus monsters and Naoto and Gridman continue to battle them with the help of Ippei and Yuka who sit at their computer stations and devise new weapons and hardware to combat evil. Each week computer viruses take over different circuits and computers to cripple various aspects of Japanese life. The battle for Earth takes place within these devices, without anyone in the real world, apart from the main cast, knowing. However, they do experience the results, as computers run amok.

In the second episode, the virus monster Bamora almost breaks out of the computer world via a rift between the dimensions, only to be held back and defeated by Gridman. This was an interesting idea, but one that never made it past that episode. So, for this series anyway, the monsters remain in the computers and out of the real world.

Naoto's parents appear regularly in the series, though neither know anything is happening in the computers or that their son is Earth's protector. They do however provide some great comic relief. Naoto's father is played by Daisuke Ban, who played Jiro/Kikaider in Toei's 1972/73 superhero series Jinzo Ningen Kikaida. In episode #4, Jiro meets Ultraman's alter ego Hayata, as Susumu Korobe appears as an inventor who has created a completely computerized car. When he is interviewed on television, Takeshi decides to send him a virus monster. As all Japanese businessmen do when they get together, the inventor along with Naoto's father go to play Goh, only to have the ride of their lives via the virus monster express. As Gridman battles the invisible monster Sterugun, a winged, flying menace, the car goes crazy. Since Gridman can not see the foe he is fighting, Ippei and Yuka send him computerized paint. He uses this to cover the moster ala "The Invisible Monster" from the cartoon series, Jonny Quest. With his opponent revealed, Gridman triumphs and the car is returned to normal. This episode features some hilarious reaction shots of both Korobe and Ban.

One of the best directed episodes was #33, in which a new student shows up looking just like Takeshi, only having confidence and acting cool. As he arrives on the scene, he stops a mugger from stealing Yuka's purse. Yuka and

Benola

Jubagon

Metalas

this new stranger become friends, infuriating Takeshi. It is here that we get a look into why Takeshi is the way he is. In a flashback that he has, we see a much younger Takeshi receiving a paper airplane from an old lady in a field. As he flies it and plays with it, his parents appear and take it from him, his father stepping on it and stamping it into the ground. The two parents then drag him away.

Takeshi sends computer viruses into watches, which take control of the people's arms that wear them. Ippei, who has one loses control of his arm, as it makes passes at Yuka, including one scene where he grabs her ass. This turns the team against each other until Gridman can defeat the monster and return the watches to normal. In a haunting scene at the end, Takeshi sees his look-alike and approaches him menacingly, with a piece of glass. As he gets nearer, his double turns into an image of him as the child from the flashback and offers him a paper plane. Takeshi takes it and watches as his double walks off, never to be seen again. Takeshi breaks down and cries as the episode ends.

This shows the powerful stories and emotions in some of the Japanese series that never get through to US audiences in the adaptations we see here. It is a very touching moment and gives you an interesting view of one of the series' characters. This episode was written by Masakazu Migita who also wrote episodes 12, 30 and 37. After this series, he went on to script two made for TV Ultra Seven movies, Solar Energy Battle and Planet of the Earthlings, as well as Ultraman Company, which is an animated part of last year's Ultraman Wonderful World movie. He is currently at work as one of the main writers on Ultraman Tiga.

On a more humorous note, in episode #35, we are introduced to Goromaking, a punk rock virus monster with a leather vest and mohawk. He enters into Yuka's hairdryer and turns her and others into punk rockers. Naoto's mother is particularly funny in this episode. As the series goes on, Ippei and Yuka create various weapons and mecha, as well as armor to help Gridman defeat his antagonists. This assists in selling toys as well as enabling Gridman to don the armor to become King Gridman and Thunder Gridman. The series could definitely do without the extras, but with series today being dictated by Bandai, it is not a surprise.

In the final episode, Kahndegifur turns into a computer virus himself and confronts Gridman in a final battle. In this episode Kahndegifur, who has been using Takeshi all this time to draw the monsters he brings to life, gets angry with him and shocks Takeshi. Takeshi becomes fed up and switches sides, helping to finally defeat Kahndegifur once and for all.

With the success of Saban's Mighty Morphin Power Rangers taking America by storm, steps were underway by DIC to bring Gridman to the states in the same butchered format. The original premise was a series called Powerboy, in which Mrs. Doubtfire star Matthew Lawrence would play Zack Jason, a guitar playing, computer game expert who would become the computer virus fighting superhero. However, with the threat of lawsuits from Saban and pressure from FOX, DIC changed names quick. It seems Hiam Saban felt that he had a monopoly on the word Power, and his characters had the same names, Zack the Black Ranger and Jason the Red Ranger. So, Zack Jason became Sam Collins and then was born Superhuman Samurai Syber-Squad. As a side note, Saban's folloup series to Power Rangers was to be called Cybertron and feature a cyber squad of heroes, but after DIC's series was announced, Saban changed his to VR Troopers.

As in Gridman, Syber-Squad featured a group of kids who helped Sam Collins/Servo in their fight against Kilokahn (Kahndegifur). The difference is that there were now three assistants, Tanker, Amp and Syd who actually piloted the mecha into the computer world instead of sitting at computer screens controlling them. Takeshi Tado's counterpart was a black clad youth named Malcom Fink. Although Takeshi was a geek and outcast, Malcom is a snob, thinking himself too good for everyone else and therefore, like Takeshi, is also an outcast. Sam and Malcom share an affection for another student Jennifer. This is where their rivalry lies. Malcom is played by Glen Beaudin, who is actually the best actor in the series and brings a very evil personality to his character. His interaction with Kilokahn (voiced by British actor Tim Curry of Rocky Horror Picture Show) is very inspired and their characters mesh very well with each other.

Tim Curry lends a threateningly evil voice to Kilokahn as he refers to humans as meat things and refers to himself as Ruler of the Digital World. The other characters in the series are pretty insipid and mostly interact either in the halls or cafeteria of the school they attend or in Sam's basement bedroom, saving considerably on budgets requried for sets. There are some funny moments though, like the time when Tanker replies to a problem with the line "Next thing you know, you'll tell us we really speak Japanese!"

DIC gets a lot of mileage out of the special effects scenes from Gridman, as there are 49 episodes of Syber-Squad and only 39 of Gridman. In Tsuburaya's series, many of the monsters are reused as mechanized versions of previous monsters or actual reappearances of some. DIC compounds this by sometimes starting episodes off with battles as well as fights at the end. This causes reuse of re-edited fights and many monsters recurring in various episodes. For example, the monster Bagilla first appears in episode #5 of Gridman, is revived in episode #6 and is then mechanized in episode #18. The ninja monster Synobillar first appears in #9, is revived in episode #15 and is slightly modified and returns in episode #29 as Kung Fu Synobillar. Double up on those and that is a lot of appearances in a 49 episode show. Also keep in mind that in Japan, Gridman is a weekly show, so in the case of Bagilla, between episodes 6 and 18 is a 12 week period. For Su-

perhuman Samurai Syber-Squad, being a daily show, monsters can appear multiple times in one week.

This may not be so bad though, as the monsters are very good in design. They are detailed, without being unnecessarily cluttered. Their designs are for the most part serious in nature, as opposed to the silly and comical monsters featured in the Toei Television series at the time. Most monsters, like many of their Toei counterparts are based on what they may be invading. For instance, the creature Eyegungar, which takes over a video camera and sucks people into the lens, has a lens for an eye. Other monsters also have unique characteristics, like Volcadon, which has various sized volcanoes on its back. These monsters though are logical in design (keeping in mind we are still talking rubber and latex) and look more a combination of biological and mechanical organisms than some of Toei's bizarre, way out beasties with water faucet noses or traffic light heads. Even the monster Goromaking with his mohawk and leather jacket looks cool and menacing.

The characters in the DIC version may be campy and corny, but as always, it is the monsters and the scenes with Servo/ Gridman that make this show worth watching. Even those scenes are different in appearance. The main premise in Gridman is that once Gridman and the virus enter a computer, rather than having them stand on circuit boards with wires hanging all over, the circuits and computer innards look like stylized, neon buildings and cityscapes. This makes for some stunning sets. In Japan, the special effects scenes were shot on D2 Digital Video. This would allow shooting at high speed so that when the tape was played back at normal speed, the fighting would be slowed down to make the monsters seem to have more mass. This is a technique that has been used for years in Japan, dating back to Godzilla, King of the Monsters (1954). Up until this point though, it had only been able to be done on film. The D2 Digital Video now allows this to do be done on video. The video look is sharper and brighter than what you get on film, although film is richer and more realistic. The video format fits with the concept that they are in a computerized world. In the DIC version, the special effects scenes were run through a process called "Filmlook." This adds a bit of grain and blur to give the illusion of film and loses the sharp video look of the original. The actors' scenes were done on Betacam SP in Japan and on film in America, so mostly, DIC had to change the appearance of the monsters' scenes to match those of the actors.

Character similarities are more abundant here than in other edited adaptations. In the final episode, which is a two parter available on video as "The Glitch That Stole Christmas." Apart from the Christmas theme of the DIC version, the elements from the Japanese finale are intact. Malcom and Kilokahn have a falling out and Malcom ends up switching sides, much like Takeshi, and helps Sam Collins as Servo defeats Kilokahn. However, instead of staying dead, Kilokahn is revived so that the syndicated cycle would not really have an end and it could keep circulating. The reviving of Kilokahn was actually done in a clever and logical way. Since Kilokahn is an elaborate computer program, it is lucky for him that Malcom backs up his computer files each day...

Superhuman Samurai Syber-Squad spawned a variety of toys and merchandise. Playmates carried the adapted Bandai toys and unlike Bandai were prepared to meet the demnd for the goods. Playmates was used to high demand having done the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles line. Whether demand was low or production was high, is a matter of debate, but a planned second line of monster figures never materialized and its place came a new batch of Servo figures from the same mold colored in different metallic colors such as purple, green, silver and red. However, the initial line was every bit as varied as the first line of Power Rangers toys. The Servo figure was held to a price under $10.00 by gutting the motion activated sounds and lights of the original Bandai toys. Instead you got a hollow shell, user friendly for the kids they were aimed at.

After Gridman, Tsuburaya Productions returned to efforts to reviving its Ultraman franchise with Ultraman Zearth and the new, innovative Ultraman Tiga. Many fans at the time, originally complained that Gridman should have been another new Ultraman series. I am glad it was not, because in bringing out Gridman, TPC showed us that you can still have a new, exciting concept for a giant superhero series without featuring an Ultra character in it.

Opposite page, Upper left = Gridman in a life or death struggle with a computer virus monster, **Upper right** = a portrait of a microworld hero, **Bottom** = Behind the scenes suiting up one of Gridman's myriad foes

JAC!
スーパーヒーロー座談会

Sonny Chiba's Japan Action Club (J.A.C.)

By: Damon Foster

When Sonny Chiba founded his Japan Action Club in Ebizu during 1969, do you think he trained actors how to do karate and stunt work? Is the Pope Catholic? Does Rose Kennedy have a black dress? The first TV program that these young, new JAC members (proteges of Sonny Chiba himself) worked on was an obscure, rarely seen, heard of or even talked about drama called Judo Icho Kusen, which means roughly, "One Line of Judo." At this point, the JAC members were mainly just extras, stuntmen and background characters. The main martial arts choreography and action was done by a ten-member martial arts group called "Ken Ono Yukai". 1971's Kamen Rider offered more of the same, with JAC members again playing second fiddle to the members of Ken Ono Yukai, who still had the spotlight.

Regardless, JAC gained more popularity each year, as they collaborated with Ken Ono Yukai for more superhero thrillers like the adequate Henshin Ninja Arashi, the decent Barom 1, and the excellent Kamen Rider V3. 1972's Kikaider program broke new grounds (and maybe bones) in that finally the JAC stuntmen had bigger parts than the guys from Ken Ono Yukai. Kikaider marked the debut of two young JAC actors called Kenji Ohba and Junichi Haruta, who did stunt work and wore monster costumes on the show. As JAC members continued to flourish at Toei, Ken Ono Yukai's bunch faded out, but were still involved in the remaining Kamen Rider programs of the 1970s, but not the ones of the 1980s. In fact, the last Toei non-Kamen Rider TV show that Ken Ono Yukai had any involvement in at all was 1974's GoRangers. After this, JAC took over doing Toei superhero programs, while Ken Ono Yukai worked for other companies in TV shows like Red Tiger.

As for JAC, their martial arts, choreography, acrobats, and stunts got more incredible each

year. Their action in shows like Space Sheriff Gavan and Sun Vulcan(not to mention movies like Roaring Fire and Shoguns's Shadow) was first rate, in fierce competition with all that Chinese kung fu stuff, and easily blowing away the fights in most American films (which is not an unusual accomplishment). But by 1983, things had changed. Japanese parents had complained of all the violence their twerps were viewing on the tube. As I see it, if you don't like something, don't watch it. Parents should communicate with their spoiled brats and not the TV stations. If they don't want their kiddies to watch such programs, they shouldn't forget that most TVs have on/off switches, not to mention channel changers.

Enough shitheads whined to Toei and TV Asahi, so the quality of action in such programs was reduced. With decent fights less in demand, JAC nearly went bankrupt. So Chiba formed a new JAC branch in 1983, the JAC Training Center, which specifically trains stuntmen. This helped the JAC group to make ends meet during a time of near bankruptcy, but didn't keep JACtress Yuki Yajima from leaving the series Bioman after about the first ten episodes, because JAC still couldn't afford to pay her. The original concept was for Yajima to have frequent duels with Yukari Oshima (who played a villain) during the course of the program. But with Yajima quitting, the script had to be changed, her character was killed off and replaced by someone else.

Fortunately, there are still enough adult movies and TV shows made to keep JAC in business. JAC members have also expanded their services to other types of entertainment, such as Broadway-like stage shows and plays. JAC members have learned many entertaining talents besides acting and stunts, many member have learned singing, comedy and dancing. Since JAC's debut in 1969, they've been involved in thousands of movies and TV shows.

Their only TV series ever released to America was Dynaman, but Americans can also see their work in movies like Message From Space, Roaring Fire, most of master Chiba's films, and Legend of the Eight

Space Sheriff Sharivan (Uchu Keiji Sharivan) Comes to America!

By: Damon Foster

The fandom for Live Action Superheroes from Japan has grown in America and there are more of us watching these shows now than there was ten years ago. When I was in Japan during 1985, American fans of Toei's heroes were still pretty uncommon. So the Japanese actors who played these superheroes were surprised and flattered to learn they have fans in the U.S.A. , and this made meeting some of them easier for me.

Of course , I must thank my friend Takahiko Mamiya, an illustrator for TV Kun Magazine. If it weren't for his influence, meeting members of Sonny Chiba's Japan Action Club may have been more difficult. I saw in person superstars like Etsuko Shiomi, Hiroyuki Sanada, and even Sonny Chiba himself. But better yet, I actually met and spoke to my all time favorites: Junichi (Dyna Black) Haruta, and Kenji (Gavan) Ohba.

When my friend Barrie Evans went to Japan in 1987, he too was fortunate enough to meet a celebrity, the one and only Hiroshi Watari. Hiroshi's best work was when he played Space Sheriff Sharivan. Other programs to his credit include: Metaldar (cameo), Juspion (co-starring as Boomerang), and the title hero in Spielvan (pronounced Speeruban), which he had just finished when Barrie met him. Hiroshi was surprised not only that he had an American fan, but also that the fan was an adult. With Spielvan out of the way, Samurai.

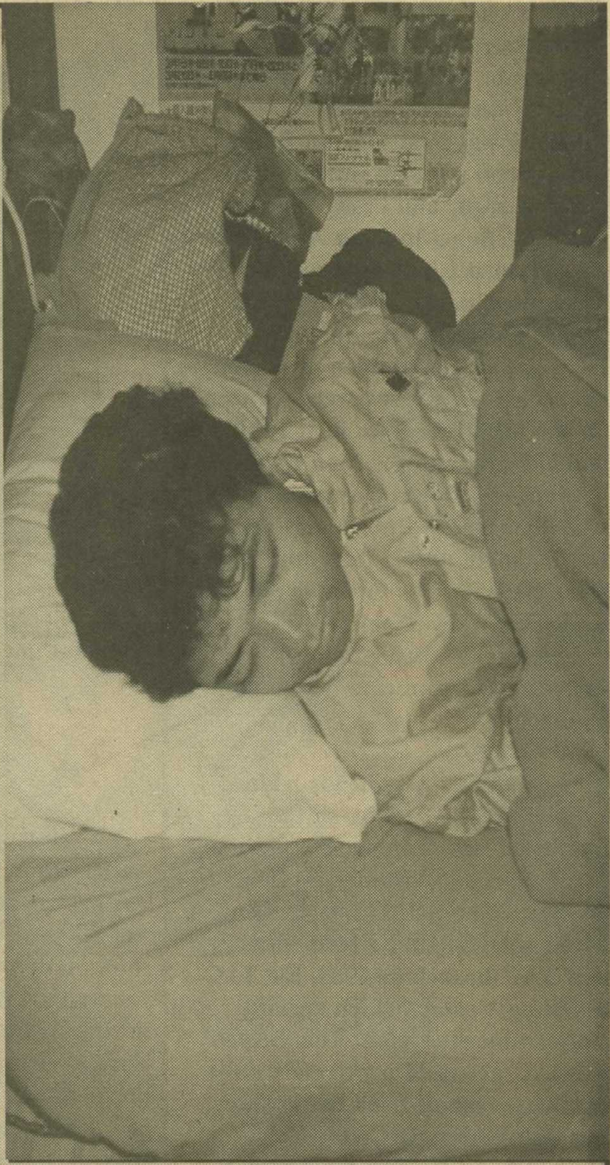
Some of the more famous stars from JAC are Etsuko Shiomi who worked in numerous JAC and Toei TV programs including The Bodyguards, and Kikaider 01. She also appeared in the films: Female Assasin, Karate Lady, 13 Steps, The Great Chase, Sure Kill, and Sister Streetfighter. She also played in the series The Young Detective, with the rising star, Hiroshi Miyauchi.

Kenji Ohba, JAC megastar started his career in the early 1970s by playing monsters in Kikaida, and background characters in movies like The Killing Machine, Tiger's Claw, Sister Streetfighter and Legend of the Eight Samurai. He also played superheros in the programs: Space Sheriff Gavan, Denziman, and Battle Fever J.

Many years have passed since Hiroshi Watari was sighted in California, where he stayed for almost a year, trying to get a job as a stuntman, and working in an L.A. sushi bar. The embarrassment of Japanese tourists recognizing him as the former superhero Space Sheriff Sharivan led him to wear lenseless glasses (just the frames) and grow a beard. Unfortunately, his only film role in America was an amateur superhero satire, shot on video, produced by yours truly, and directed by August Ragone. To add insult to injury, the damn video spoof was never finished! So it was back to Tokyo for Hiroshi, where he continued working for JAC, and has become quite successful on stage. Aside from having the title roles in Space Sheriff Sharivan and Dimensional Warrior Spielvan, he was also in an episode or two of Metaldar.

(For more about the excursions of JAC's Hiroshi Watari in California, go back one page....)

Sharivan cont.



Hiroshi had a lot of spare time on his hands and Barrie hung out with him often.

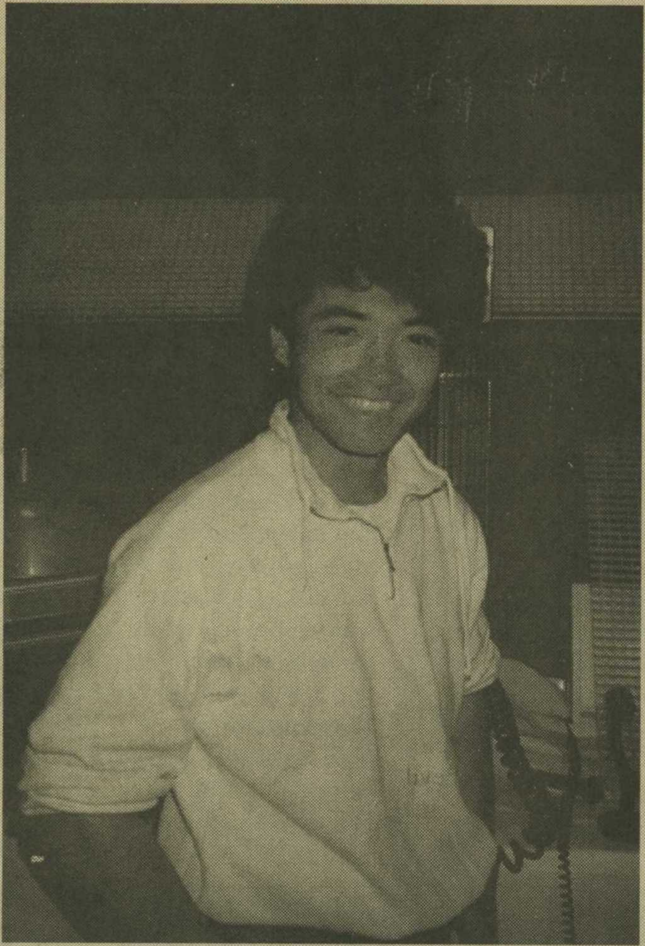
Upon return to California, Barrie informed me of his paling around with Sharivan in Tokyo. Needless to say, I was impressed. But I was even more impressed when we heard our longtime hero was planning a series of vacations in America. This sounded too good to be true. I have grown up watching Japanese superheroes all my life. I liked them so much that I made amateur movies where me and my friends got to play superheroes very inspired by the Japanese classics. Some of these non-professional videos were shown locally on Community Access Cable. I played superhero characters in Ultra Cyborg, Secret of the Superheroes, Kamen Riders Vs. General Dark, and Androidman. So as an amateur superhero, I was more than thrilled to learn that my next house guest would be a professional superhero from Japan!

April, 1987: I woke up early one morning about 9:17 AM on my top bunk in my bedroom. I couldn't tell if what had been happening these last few days was a dream or what. Was it all real? Was the second Space Sheriff really sleeping beneath me in my lower bed? Thinking the whole week must have been a dream that was too good to be true, I looked down onto the bottom bunk and there he was. A genuine member of the Japan Action Club sleeping in my room!

He spent a whole week at my house before going on to see other parts of the country, such as New York and Los Angeles. During his stay here, me and his other American fan Barrie Evans showed him all the local tourist spots for sight-seeing. We visited the usual tourist attractions in San Francisco like the Golden Gate Bridge and Fisherman's Wharf. It was hilarious. Every now and then, we'd do quotes from Space Sheriff Sharivan like "Sekisha!" and "Mado meh!" What really amused bystanders is when we'd begin fake-fighting each other, re-enacting scenes from Hiroshi's TV show through martial arts and acrobats. Hiroshi turned out to be a fun-loving, wild and crazy guy. He even had the guts to get onto a policeman's parked motorcycle when the cop had gone into a nearby store. After the sun went down, we decided to give the foreign superhero a taste of the bay area's hip and happenin' chic nightlife. So we got into our punkiest, rockin'est attire and prepared to hit the most radical, underground dance clubs we could find. Not wanting to be left out, Hiroshi asked if he could borrow some of my new wave clothes, and asked if I would spike his hair.

After these adjustments in fashion, we were off to a local club that catered mostly to death rock, punk, industrial, ska, metal, rockabilly, and glam. Being in top physical condition, Hiroshi out danced all of us and seemed to enjoy occasional slamdancing. As he danced to the likes of Killing Joke and the Ramones, he incorporated kicks and karate moves into his dance movements. Back then, I was heavily into the nightlife, and enjoyed doing back flips off of stages and platforms while dancing in clubs. But this was the first time I ever had a friend in a club who also knew how to thrill other club goers by doing such dangerous gymnastics on the crowded dancefloor. Both me and Hiroshi got blind wasted drunk that night after gulping down kamikazies and beers. Interesting to note that one foolish guy on the dancefloor was in the mood for starting trouble, and apparently wanted to start a fight. The idiot intentionally bumped into me, and later clumsily bumped into Hiroshi. Fortunately for him, he ceased his harassment. Can you imagine Sharivan wasting some drunken fool in a nightclub? It would have been glorious!

As the hours went by and each of us had failed at picking up on any nearby females, we all sat around, waiting for one of us to get sober enough to drive. We all directed our attention to the ceiling. Hanging decorations included four inflatable Godzillas in each corner. Hiroshi: "Aaaa, asoko wa Gojira desu! Tasukete!" That



roughly means "It's Godzilla, help me!" Then Hiroshi mimicked Ultraseven and pretended to throw the Eyeslugger Boomerang at the inflatable monsters above us. The following morning, it became apparent that even cybernetic superheroes can get hangovers. We decided to spend the day relaxing at home, just watching TV. He looked through my collection of videotapes and was both flattered and bashful to see that I had so many of his TV shows. But his main interest was 1966's Ultraman program, which he hadn't seen since he was a youngster. He stuck the tapes into my VCR and laughed up a storm as he saw the Science Patrol and everyone dubbed in English. He wanted to get a copy of the whole series, so we hooked up duping cables and an additional VCR. And there he sat, quite amused as he watched nearly all 39 episodes in order, back to back!

Another day, it turns out was my birthday. We celebrated it with the obligatory cake and candles. Always a mischievous prankster, I removed vanilla frosting from Hiroshi's slice of cake while he wasn't looking . In its place I put mayonnaise, thinking he'd take just one bite and spit it out. Yet he assumed it was some exotic American flavor that was new to him. Everybody at the table laughed to the point of stomach cramps, watery eyes and near suffocation when we explained to Hiroshi that he'd been eating mayonnaise on cake. What killed us was his facial expression upon realizing why the cake tasted so strange. Hiroshi vowed revenge upon me, saying he can't wait to treat me to dinner the next time I come to Japan.

But Hiroshi didn't spend his entire American vacation at my house. Barrie took Hiroshi and another vacationing Japanese, Yukari Suzuki down to Los Angeles where they hung around with former bay area artist and now Hollywood pro Steve Wang (who supplied FX for Aliens, Frog Town, Predator, The Jitters, Kung Fu Rascals, and my old superhero video Ultra Cyborg).

Later despite poor English, Hiroshi even set out on his own and toured the East Coast. Little is known about his misadventures in New York, except that a dishonest taxi driver tried to rip him off. It was pretty obvious to everyone that Hiroshi knew very little English, so the driver figured he was easy prey. The charge on the meter said $10, yet the crooked driver kept trying to say it was $100.

But Hiroshi knew better, you can't fool a Space Sheriff. Shariban, I mean Hiroshi angrily yelled out, "Why wan handred dola?" "Why wan handred dola?" Eventually the potential thief behind the wheel got panicky at seeing the violently angry Japanese actor yell and clench his fists, so that scumbag cab driver backed down and accepted the $10, and wasn't given a tip. Hiroshi came back to my house a couple of days before returning to Japan. He returned to California two more times, and on one visit, he brought along J.A.C member Yuki Keiji, who was a regular on Bioman and has appeared in Dynaman and Kung Fu Chan.

The articles on J.A.C. and Hiroshi Watari were reprinted from Oriental Cinema and Maffapa. Contact Damon Foster for more information at: PO Box 576 Fremont CA 94537 0576

KAMEN RIDER BLACK

Series review by Jay Johnson
Songs translated by Rie Collier

KAMEN RIDER BLACK was the 8th entry in the long running Kamen Rider series produced by Toei Studios in Japan.

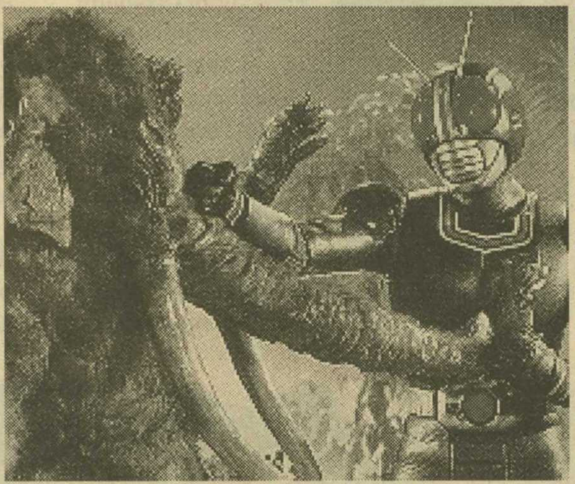
At first glance, the show appears to be similar to its earlier series siblings in characters and storylines-- the show revolves around the Kaizo Ningen central figure, usually (but not always !) a human that has been genetically altered by the various bad guys. The villains intend to use the mutant Rider character to wreak havoc for their evil purposes, but are foiled by our hero's goody-goody side as he immediately turns against his nasty would-be masters.

KAMEN RIDER BLACK differs from its contemporaries in several key areas, most importantly in its central figure, Kotaro Minami. (played by Tetsuo Kurata)

As the show opens, Kotaro and his best friend Nobohiko have been kidnapped by Dalom, Beshium and Baloemm, white-robed priests who serve a secretive organization called Golgom. The two humans are to be slowly transformed via bioengineering into insect - mutants called Black Sun and Shadow Moon. The pair are each fitted with mystic "King Stones" which give them their mutant powers.

The priests plan to preside over a battle between the two mutants once they emerge from their hibernation-cocoons. The winner of this event would become the "EON KING" and rule the known universe for one hundred years in the name of the evil Golgom.

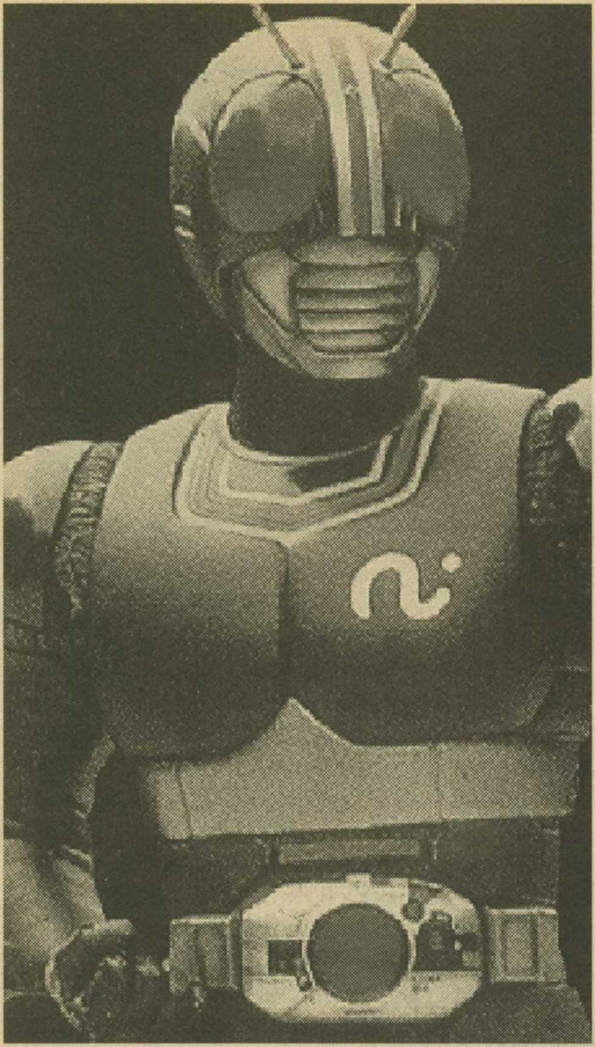
Fortunately for our hero, the evildoers' plans are foiled by Nobohiko's father, Dr Akizuki, originally a member of Golgom's secret society of evil scientists. The good doctor interferes with Dalom's transformation ceremony, giving Kotaro the opportunity to escape. Nobohiko, however, is not so lucky, and becomes cocooned by the priests. During his brief freedom Kotaro encounters the cyber-bike called Battlehopper, meant for Black Sun, which he uses to make good on his escape. The priests eventually catch up to Kotaro and thrash him soundly for his jailbreak. The fierce battle somehow energizes the King Stone of Black Sun, and to the dismay of the priests, Kotaro suddenly transforms into the insect-humanoid.



After driving the stunned priests away, Kotaro denounces the evil Golgom and takes a vow to battle them under a new name: KAMEN RIDER BLACK.

Later in the pilot episode Dr. Akizuki is killed by Golgom for his part as Kotaro's savior, and a bitter Kamen Rider Black pledges to save his friend Nobohiko from the clutches of Golgom. The three priests concentrate their attention on the incubation of Shadow Moon, and dispatch their most powerful agent , Belgenia to deal with Kamen Rider Black. Belgenia fancies himself as Golgom's "Holy Knight" and armed with the Satansaber proves nearly a match for the Kamen Rider.

By the middle of the series Nobohiko's transformation is completed, and he emerges from his cocoon as the evil Shadow Moon with one purpose—to kill Kamen Rider Black !! Shadow Moon's first act is to destroy the reptilian Belgenia, who had intended to take the leadership of Golgom for himself. Retrieving the Satansaber from Belgenia's possession, Shadow Moon bestows awesome new powers to the three priests, and the stage is set for the battle of the Century Kings:



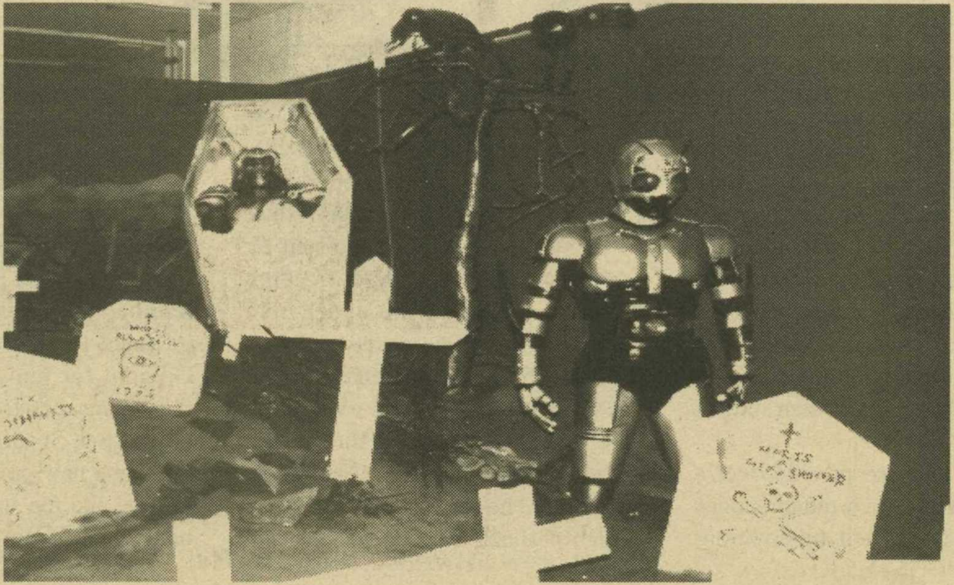
Shadow Moon vs Kamen Rider Black !!

Some of the earlier rider shows failed to concentrate on the psychological aspects of the main character--simply stated, many of the earlier shows never quite explained to us exactly WHY our bug-eyed buddies felt compelled to play the hero. Kotaro Minami is very defined-- driven by rage and remorse, he feels responsible for both the death of Dr Akizuki and for the abandonment of Nobohiko to the priests.

He also takes on the role of protector for Nobohiko's girlfriend Kazumi (Ayumi Taguchi) and sister Kyoko (Akemi Inoue). Kotaro's plight is even further complicated with the arrival of Shadow Moon; Kotaro cannot use his full might against his rival for fear of harming Nobohiko !! The treatment of Kotaro's character is super-- we are dragged along with him on his battle with Golgom literally by the seat of our pants, never quite knowing what to expect.

The show is treated with complete seriousness by original story author Shotaro Ishimori and screenwriters Kenichi Araki and Takeshi Yamada. The series never stoops to the inane comedy relief-gags found in KAMEN RIDER STRONGER and later in both the Japanese and American versions of KAMEN RIDER BLACK RX. This show is loaded with white-knuckle action, cliffhangers and MONSTERS !! Let's just say in short that the monster suits for KAMEN RIDER BLACK are phenomenal ! Monster suits were constructed by Rainbow Industries, also responsible for the equally exceptional monsters in 1988's KAMEN RIDER BLACK RX. The rider costume itself is streamlined and designed well for the gymnastic stunts required by stunt actor Jiro Okamoto (in the role of Black)— vastly superior to the suit used for BLACK RX. The RX suit was bulky and like Warner Brother's BATMAN costume, very limited in terms of actor mobility.

One element of this show that totally deviates from its predecessors is that there is no army of henchmen



accompanying the main villains. That mainstay of early Kamen Riderdom is wonderfully absent here, and more screen time is allotted to character development as opposed to endless boring battles with legions of expendable fighters making irritating "hooting" sounds. (as in KAMEN RIDER X and KAMEN RIDER STRONGER) The henchmen would return to the KAMEN RIDER BLACK RX series a little less goofy, trading their gimpy leotards and wrestling masks for cool armored uniforms similar to the STAR WARS stormtroopers.

Gratuitous violence is at a premium in KAMEN RIDER BLACK--- The often-used "Riderpunch" and "Riderkick" employed by earlier Rider heroes takes on a new high here, combining impressive optical effects with the Rider's explosive coup de grace.

The battles are fever-pitched, a little blood and ooze here and there, limbs are frequently severed from the various beasties, and Kamen Rider Black himself takes more than his fair share of licks, burns and multiple steaming lacerations in virtually every episode. KAMEN RIDER BLACK is not as gory as 1974's KAMEN RIDER AMAZON, but it's loaded with violence nonetheless.

Tetsuo Kurata as Kotaro is arguably the finest actor to portray the human Rider character since Hiroshi Miyauchi of KAMEN RIDER V-3 and KAIKETSU ZUBAT fame. Kurata himself plays his role to the hilt,bringing an intense, believable presence to the character of Kotaro Minami. He would reprise the role in 1988's series entry, KAMEN RIDER BLACK RX, a series in which though excellent effects-wise, would pale in comparison to KAMEN RIDER BLACK's serious tone and excellent fight choreography. KAMEN RIDER BLACK RX would go on to be known to American fans as Saban's MASKED RIDER.

ULTRAMAN veteran Susumu Kurobe (Hiyata) is featured in the series' first half as Dr. Hideomi Kuromatsu, one of Golgom's chief scientists, and he hams it up well playing the evil monster-maker. Too bad his character gets knocked off so soon in the series.

Music is provided by Ryundo Uzaki in typical 80's fashion, loaded with distorted guitars mixed well underneath Billy Idolesque synthesizer lines and jazzy horn sections. The new-wavy soundtrack is a bit out of place during the battle scenes, where it is used to extreme. What the heck—it beats those moronic ULTRAMAN TARO themes ,at least. One will learn to live with it. Tetsuo Kurata even takes a shot as vocalist for the show's opening theme song, trading his Rider togs in for a turn at the microphone.

All in all, KAMEN RIDER BLACK delivers solid Kaizo Ningen fare, and in this reviewer's opinion, no Rider series or feature film since has come close to it. True to its creator's vision, KAMEN RIDER BLACK is superb.

Exerpts from the earlier plot synopsis and cast credits were culled from Markalite magazine's summer 1990 issue, featuring a Kamen Rider Black article by August Ragone. Mr. Ragone's writings on this series literally launched me into the exciting world of KAMEN RIDER. Thanks August !

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Theme songs

Opening Theme: KAMEN RIDER BLACK

Japanese

TORI NO KOERO SORAWO KAKERO KONO HOSHI NO TAME
KIMI HA MITAKA AI GA MAKKA NI MOERU NOWO
KURAI YAMI NO SOKO DE KIKEN GA WADAKAMATU
SHINJIRU YATA GA SAKEBU SHINJITU NO OJYA
YUMI WO MITUZUKERU KOTO GA ORE NO FANTASY
IKIRU KOTO GA SUKISA
AOKU UKABU COSMO
TOKI WO KOERU SOWARO KAKERO KONO HOSHI NO TAME
ATUKU MOYASE NAMIDA NAGASE ASHUNO YUKINI
KAMEN RIDER
KAMEN RIDER

English

GO ACROSS TIME, FLY THROUGH THE SKY, FOR THIS PLANET
DANGER REMAINS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DARKNESS
BELIEVER CRY OUT FOR THE TRUE KING
MY FANTASY IS TO KEEP DREAMING
I LIKE TO LIVE
BLUE COSMOS
GO ACROSS TIME, FLY THROUGH THE SKY, FOR THIS PLANET
BURN HOT, WEEP TEARS, FOR TOMORROW'S COURAGE
KAMEN RIDER, KAMEN RIDER

end theme: LONG LONG AGO, 20th CENTURY

Japanese

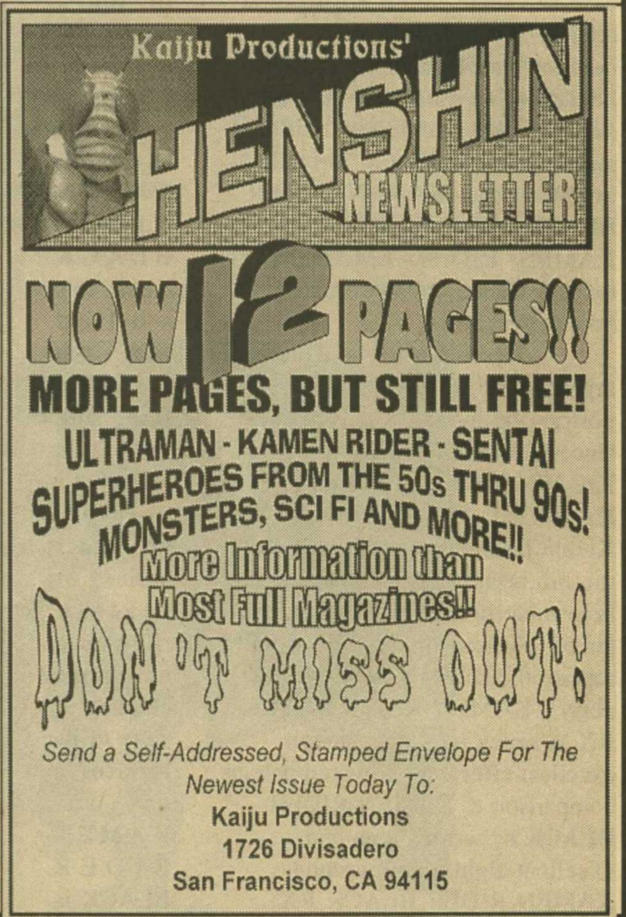
MIDORI NASU DAICHI
SHIKI ORIORI NO HANA
SHIROI SUNAHAMA TO KAREN NA SAKURAGAI
MADA HITO NO MUNE NI KUKUMORI GA

ending theme, cont.

ATTE
MADA UMI NO IRU GA KOBARUTO NO JIDAI
FURUKI YOKI TOKI
LONG LONG AGO, 20th CENTURY

english

GREEN LAND
EVERY FOUR SEASON'S FLOWER
WHITE SANDY BEACH AND PRECIOUS SEA SHELLS
PEOPLE STILL HAD WARMTH INSIDE
THE COLOR OF THE OCEAN WAS STILL OF COBALT
GOOD OLD DAYS
LONG LONG AGO, 20th CENTURY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PUTTING THE FUN BACK INTO COLLECTING

By Greg Cordaro

A few years back I had discovered the fact that a company actually produced Godzilla figures. I was in heaven. Despite the fact that I was in my mid twenties, I was just a kid, excited to get these new toys. It was a lot of fun hunting these figures down, going to different shops and different shows, hoping to complete my Bandai collection.

If you were like me as a kid, Godzilla meant everything. I'd scour through the TV listings each week hoping some Giant Monster Movie would be on, whether it be Godzilla, The Gargantuas or even Gappa. The kids at school would talk all day about the films the next day in school. And as much as we loved these movies and these monsters, we never had the toys to play with.

C'mon, tell me that you didn't substitute a rubber T-Rex toy for a Big G or a Pterodactyl for Rodan or even a rubber spider for Spiega. They didn't make Godzilla toys, so we made our own. And just like every other young Godzilla fan, I was freaking for those toys that were put down the sliding pond in Smog Monster. The best we got were the Aurora Models which I beat the hell out of in my backyard.

So here I am in '97 selling Godzilla toys and having fun. But I have to answer the obvious burning question! Why are these toys so damn expensive? And the answer in a nutshell is scarcity and demand. And yes, I do plan to elaborate, however pitiful that

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Mattel Rodan (in box) -$350.00
Takara Combat Joe DX Godzilla (in box) - B/O over $1,100.00
Sega Plush Godzilla(over 1.5 fT tall w/sounds & music) - B/O over $550.00
Bandai Anniv. King Ghidora (in boxw/instructions) -B/O over $500.00
Marmit Ultra-7 (Festival EXCLUSIVE Figure!!!) - B/O over $400.00
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may be.

What a novice collector should understand is that these toys aren't mass produced on a scale the way our American toys are. Also they were really intended for the Japanese toy collectors. American importers can't buy direct the way TOY-R-US can buy Star Wars Toys from Kenner. Most of the toys that have reached the U.S. shores were sent over via a middleman or a Japanese contact of an American dealer.

Through the course of time, just about everything sold becomes scarce. Items become rare do to low production run, end of production run and just stock being sold out. And it seems that each year more collectors join it, more speculators jump in and the demand drastically increases on already scarce items.

So what is the end result? High prices on popular items. Everybody want the same figures. Retail prices have skyrocketed. And people wind up scratching their heads wondering why.

I'm not out to B.S. anyone. But I do feel that the general public deserves a logical explanation. And I'll do my best to detail the current situation.

I'm not out to bleed anyone dry. Despite what some people think. I'm not getting rich off selling Bandais. If I'm charging $100.00 for a figure, I'm usually making around 30% profit off of it. Keep in mind the fact that most dealers lay out cash to buy figures and collections and sometimes may have to sit on unsold items. Add in all the dealers bills and costs like advertising, long distance phone calls that add up and show costs like tables and transportation and rooming costs. Bills seem to pile up.

And believe it or not, a market has been created by these figures somewhere along the way. And like any other commodity such as a home or a car, rare Bandais are usually sold based on current market value. True, an item is worth only what one person is willing to pay. What one must take into consideration is that demand and interest is at an all time high. And there isn't some hidden warehouse somewhere filled with Baragon figures. Most dealers, when buying collections from fans may have to lay out $200 on a figure and hope to sell it for $250. Fans selling collections are definitely more aware of current retail prices as of late.

My advice to a frustrated fan? If you really want an expensive item, and don't want to pay these prices, then be patient and wait. Maybe a Guiron figure will pop up at a Garage sale for 10 bucks or maybe you may find a Biollante figure at a local flea market for 25 bucks. At one time many comic book and collectible stores sold Bandai figures before the Trendmaster/Tri-Star blockade. So maybe your local comic book store may have a '92 Mothra Larva collecting dust in their basement. Make a hundred phone calls to every comic book store in your state. Maybe you might score yourself a '91 Godzilla for 20 bucks. Maybe you might capture yourself a Yeti and maybe you might win the Lottery.

Truthfully, I'm not sure if I'd start collecting every Bandai right now if I were to start today. I'm not Donald Trump. But collectors who must have an item like Gorosaurus bad enough should be aware of it's value. I'm lucky enough to have started a few years back before the boom. And for those of you who know me or of me, go back to early G-Fun issues (I believe 11 or 12). You'll see my name pop up as a frustrated collector who back in '94 couldn't find Baragon, back then!

So why do most dealers sell Baragon for over $200? First off, let's face facts, he's a popular character, the sculpt is one of Bandais' best, he's generally hard to find, and guys like my friend Nathan try to sell them to me for my own retail price! I go to shows every month and talk to other dealers and get info on other dealers. I don't see many Baragons for sale or even hear of many sales of the figure. But I do get about 10 phone calls a week from collectors still looking for Baragon. Yeah, and one more thing, do you think prices will ever drop down? Do you think prices will drop after the Tri-Star film generates even more interest?

I think it's a safe bet for collectors simply interested in the value of the items to "invest" in a collection. I see prices only going up in time. Not like comic books. You see, with comic books or baseball cards, at first everyone runs down to the store to buy up everything, then goes home and places everything in a plastic bags or covers. So in ten years when everyone wants to sell, there will be millions of Superman Dies issues in mint condition, bagged and boarded. There won't be a million Minyas for sale.

So what's the outcome? Well if you have a little money to burn and really want these figures, then go ahead and buy them. But understand that prices are steadily increasing. If you refuse to pay the prices, then join the club. Unfortunately money doesn't grow on trees. Just be satisfied with watching all those great movies and talking to other Fans or buy the inexpensive smaller items.

Bandai figures are great looking. They're detailed and for the most part, they are accurate representations of some of our favorite monsters. And for the over 20 year old fans, they are the toys we dreamed of having back in the 60's and 70's! But with the high demand and prices, they just aren't for everyone.

Well, I hope that I answered some questions for other collectors out there. If you see me at a show or convention, don't be afraid to come up and talk for a while. You don't have to buy anything from me, but we can talk about Destroy all Monsters all you want.

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MAT MINI REVIEWS

ZEIRAM 2

Review by Brad James Beske

Yuko Moriyama is back as the beautiful bounty hunter, Iria, in "Zeiram 2," and this time has two new partners: an untrustworthy punk named Fujicrow and a replication of the almighty Zeiram himself. Teppei and Kamiya, the bumbling electricians, are back as well as the computer, Bob. This time Iria is after an ancient teleportation device called Camerite, but Fujicrow has ideas of his own. Zeiram is even more indestructible, at first an ally, and then as a berserker. There are a few more surprises in this incarnation of the beast.

The story takes place three years after the last film, and does require you to have a passing knowledge of the original. However, "Zeiram 2" is more compelling then its predecessor in plot, action, and special effects. Teppei plays the "boy hostage" wonderfully, and Kamiya is the perfect "know-it-all" idiot. I would recommend this film to anyone. It's a great story aided by great special effects. On a scale of 1-10, I'd give it a 9.5. I can't think of any recent science fiction film that can compare to its pace and originality. The only flaw (if you can call it that) is that it relies on some of the information given in the first film. Watching this movie on a big screen (bigger than a 32' screen, that is) must have been great.

TIME OF THE APES [1987]

Directed by Atsuo Okunaka and Kiyo Sumi Fukazawa

Review by J. Crawford

William L. Cooper Jr. has to be one of the least talented filmmakers on the face of the planet. He is credited with Feature Concept and Editing. Jesse Vogel of Cinemedia Ltd. pretends to be a creative consultant. Producer Sandy Frank is no less than an international criminal. These villains have hacked up an entertaining television series into a terrible feature film. Wait a minute. Don't be overly negative about the movie. You have an assignment to do and you must show that the film has some redeeming quality. Okay. The source material for Time of the Apes is so strong that it gave me the desire to see it in its original form. Really? Yes. The original TV series played in Japan in the early 1970's and was produced by the same people who gave us Ultraman.

The show, Saru no Gundan [Army of Apes], aired from 1971 to 1974 and was produced by the company started by Eiji Tsuburaya after he left Toho in 1966. Borrowing heavily from the Planet of the Apes, the feature film tries to tell the story of two kids who, thanks to some cryogenics and an earthquake, travel to another time or, maybe, another dimension. The kids and their adult companion find the world controlled by apes. The simian makeup sfx are not as good as Zira's or Cornelius'. The ape characters' makeup is somewhere between the thousands of extra's in J. Lee Thompson's Conquest of the Planet of the Apes [4th in the series] and the simian-like aliens of Jun Fukuda's Godzilla vs. Cosmic Monster [1974].

Fans of the Kaiju Eiga will find prime examples of Tsuburaya's miniature sfx work. At the beginning of the film there is some earthquake footage that is quite impressive. This short sequence rivals some of the best stuff that appeared in so many Godzilla films. In another scene, there are shots of heavy equipment complete with POV shots from inside the cabs of the miniature trucks. These POV shots, in particular, are quite impressive considering they were done 25 years ago.

As for the English language version, Mr. Cooper and [I guess] Mr. Vogel have made some bad decisions with the dubbing. The voices given to the children are extremely high-pitched and downright annoying. The ape voices are disconcerting to hear when matched up with the bad makeup. How these two gentlemen and their producer, Mr. Frank, could watch the rough cut of their work and think they made a good film is beyond me. What is really scary is that the 1987 film is copyrighted as "A Tsuburaya Production Ltd." I guess business is business after all is said and done.

HIRUKO

Review by Michael Keller

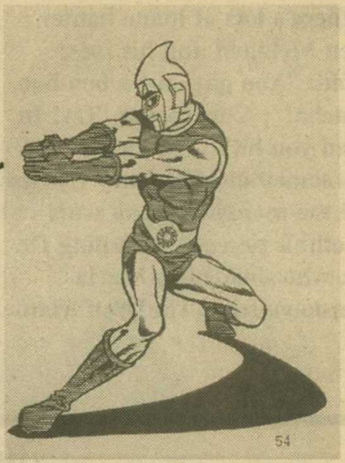
Very moody, very atmospheric, very short, and sometimes very scary Japanese horror movie about an archaeological dig, a possessed young girl, a cursed school and a bizarre spider-demon.

I haven't seen a translated version of this, but even in the original Japanese language one can be impressed by the direction, offbeat characters and bizarre special effects. One of the heroes seems to be mourning the loss of his wife/girlfriend and also has a bizarre phobia regarding insects and other vermin, causing him to carry a can of bug spray wherever he goes (this comes in very useful when attacked by hordes of spider-demons). The other hero may be the reincarnation of someone who defeated the demon before (every time the demon kills someone, the image of the person's face is burned into his back).

Definitely worth checking out.

Herbert Poe vs. The Japanese Monsters

Review by Kip Doto



Remember Space Warriors 2000, that unfortunate head-on collision of The 6 Ultra Brothers vs. The Monster Army, Ultraman Zoffy, and beyond low budget linking scenes shot outside Japan and something resembling English dubbing? If so, prepare yourselves because Spectreman has been given the same moronic makeover in Herbert Poe vs. The Japanese Monsters, a 1993 film which, to my knowledge was never officially released.

In this revised format, Spectreman is now called Metaloid. As the opening titles begin, the familiar Spectreman music is heard with the same lyrics except instead of "Spectre-Man", "Metaloid" is dropped onto the soundtrack. The evil Dr. Gori is now the benevolent Dr. Smum and Karas goes by the name Skippy. The principal cast of Spectreman are all here, but instead of fighting pollution and monsters, they're concerned about proper English sync as D.O.E.S., the Department of English Synchronization. They are pretty much in the background of the movie, and George isn't Spectreman or even Metaloid, instead he's an idiot savant who hears voices warning him about Planet E.

Herbert Poe is the story of Herbert Poe (Eddie Rice Jr.), a scrawny geek who pines after the beautiful Ms. Twain (Lee Chambers) and is bullied by his obnoxious boss, Nunzio Buttafucco (Reid McLennan, who sounds like Joe Pesci). Herbert is soon transported to the spaceship of Dr. Smum, who gives Herbert a crash course on his late father, an astronaut who was transformed by a lunar rock (scenes from Spectreman #34-35, "The Moon Dweller's Revenge") into Metaloid, a giant superhero who battled giant Japanese Monsters in 1971 Japan until he met an explosive end at the hands/ tentacles of the monster formerly known as Hedron, now called Flatula. With the aid of his father's head (the last remains) Herbert Poe is transformed into Metaloid by Dr. Smum and along with Ms. Twain and Buttafucco are dispatched to Tokyo in the year 1971 to put an end to the threat of Japanese Monsters. Oh yeah, this is also a comedy.

Unlike Space Warriors 2000, of which Tsuburaya Productions was blissfully unaware, Herbert Poe was executively produced by none other than Richard Rosenfeld, who brought Spectreman to the US back in 1977. When I first came across Herbert Poe, I was reminded of something Mr. Rosenfeld had disclosed to me back in 1993. He was telling me about his plans to revise Spectreman ala Power Rangers, scrapping everything but the fx footage in a new format. He went on to tell me that additional fx were going to be provided by Industrial Light and Magic and the new product was going to be called "Battles of Spectreman". I guess "Battles of Spectreman" eventually got scaled down to Herbert Poe.

The Spectreman footage looks a lot better here than when WTBS broadcast the series way back when or when Wonderland Video released 12-2 episode volumes in 1984. Both used tired, muddy looking 16mm prints as their source; it looks as though they went back to the negative for Herbert Poe. Aside from the new footage shot, just about everything else is Spectreman footage and dubbed, although re- dubbed would be more precise. Much of the original dialogue is retained, with

new voice talent mimicking the same lines, occasionally changing a word or two to conform to the new format. As in Space Warriors 2000, there's lots of inane banter between Metaloid and his foes; Metaloid: "You gave me a boo-boo, Cucaracha!"; Cucaracha: "Oy! In the head you hit?". Metaloid sounds something like Gary Owens and all the monsters speak with heavy ethnic accents, including Dr. Smum, who soulds like Maria Ouspenskaya from The Wolf Man.

Some attempts were made to try to blend in the new footage with the Spectreman footage, usually accomplished with similar lighting or camera angles. When he transforms into Metaloid, Herbert assumes the same arm raised position as George.

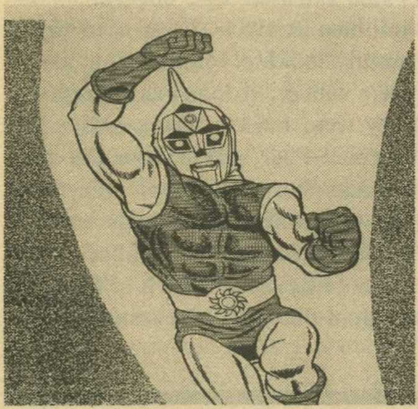
Of the cast of Herbert Poe, only Reid McLennan looks at all familiar. I suspect he did most of the ethnic monster voices as well. I've been told Eddie Rice Jr. was spotted in a music video for the ever popular, Grammy award winning group, Beck. Apparently there are two versions of Herbert Poe; one for kids and one for adults; guess which one I have? In the adult version Lee Chambers sheds her clothes in many of her scenes. Why this was done is a mystery. Actually, why Herbert Poe vs. The Japanese Monsters was made at all is pretty mystifiying, since not many people have even seen this ill advised revision of Spectreman.

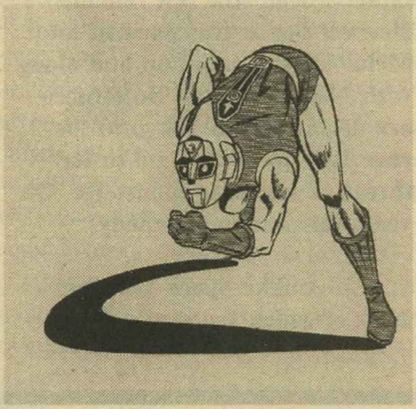
Herbert Poe vs. The Japanese Monsters
(1993) Rosenfeld-Engle-Hurwitz Productions

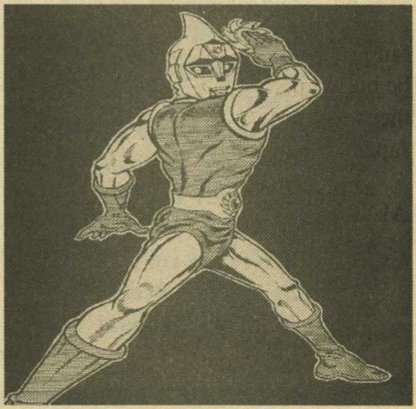
Executive Producer	**Richard L. Rosenfeld**
Co-Producer	**AlanEngle**
Producers	**Harry Hurwitz**
	Sam Hurwitz
Written by	**Sam Hurwitz**
	Paul Royale
Director of Photography	**Jose Luis Mignone**
Edited by	**Harry Hurwitz**
Directed by	**Sam Hurwitz**

Cast

Herbert Poe	**Eddie Rice Jr.**
Ms. Twain	**Lee Chambers**
Nuzio Buttafucco	**Reid McLennan**
Gino	**Michael Hurwitz**
Extra #1	**Paul Segal**
Extra #2	**Donald Thomas**
Extra #3	**Jose Cardines**
Additional Voices	**Zane Krein**







(ED)itorial

A Monstrous Life

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the listening Earth
Repeats the story of her birth:
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
What though nor real voice nor sound
Amidst their radiant orbs be found?
In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they prowl,
"And in a pinch, the Kaiju soon shall growl."

Welcome again to a soon to be coveted issue of Monster Attack Team. Without any hestitation, I would like to thank all those resposnible for this issue's creation. These publications have always been difficult to put out, even when it was just another photocopied 'zine, way back when. At the time, this type of fandom was just in its infancy. Another year has passed and another issue of the magazine has faithfully been printed. Whatever you do in life, keep your faith in it, for if you do not, it will die. Nothing deserves death, not even the little gokoburi that scurries across the kitchen floor looking for something to eat. Let me retract that statement, Cockroaches should be killed, as well as leeches, creeps, jerks, idiots, and anyone else who tries to tell you how to run your life. Do your own thing, and be proud of who you are and what you have accomplished.

But let us work together and share a bit of humanity. Without hard work, promoters, dealers, magazines, and the fan groups, none of this bad ass **** would get into your hands. Our memories of why we enjoy this hobby would soon be buried if we let all the little insignificant things get in the way. I know that everyone wants to get along and also have their own private time to enjoy their world. Remember, it's a huge planet and no one owns the rights or holds a patent on Japanese Live Action Fandom. When MAT started everything was all inclusive. Let us strive together to keep it tight.

MAT capt. Edward Holland

Let's ALL *fight monsters! Let's* ALL *really fight!*

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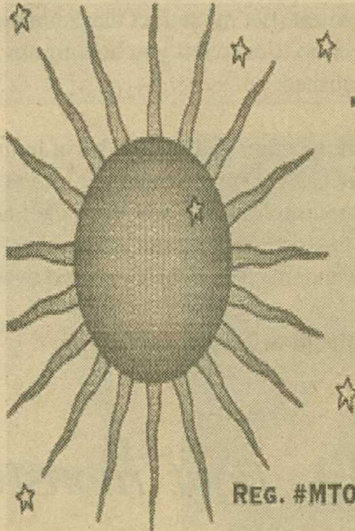

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◆ In Return Of Ultraman, in what episode does Jack receive his Ultra bracelet? Which monster did Jack battle with in this episode?

◆ In Ultraman Zearth, what is the phobia that Zearth's alter-ego Kasuto deals with?

◆ Name the organization and squad that Ultraman Zearth and Ultraman Tiga belong to separately.

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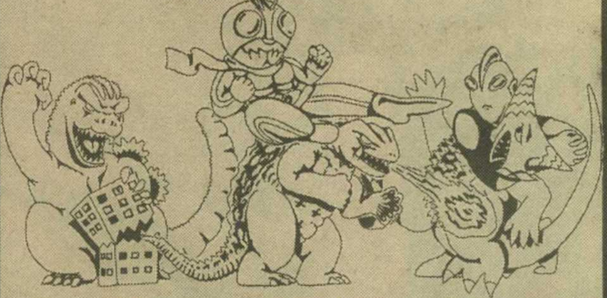

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